

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

STEP-BY-STEP

PHOTOSHOP
LAYER TIPS



Inside

MAKE YOUR MANGA
ART MORE REALISTIC
DESIGN A MECH WITH
ANIMAL REFERENCES
MIX 'N' MATCH VITAL
HISTORICAL DETAILS

GET INSPIRED BY

WORLD OF WARCRAFT

Discover new digital art skills with Blizzard's **Sam Didier**
PLUS Learn how **Laurel D Austin** paints multiple figures!

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Welcome...

to a blizzard of art skills



Ever since ImagineFX launched we've managed to embrace both digital and traditional strands of fantasy and sci-fi art, enabling Frazetta to rub shoulders with Andrew Jones. So this issue I was excited when Blizzard's senior art manager Jeremy Cranford chose us to feature a very special project, as fantasy's

finest traditional artists share their visions of Blizzard's digital worlds. On page 42 you'll find exclusive new inspirational art from Alex Ross, Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell, Simon Bisley, Syd Mead, Todd Lockwood, Michael Whalen, Alex Horley, Paul Bonner and Craig Mullins. We all have a favourite – which is yours?

The Blizzard connection carries on in this issue's workshops. On page 70 Sam Didier shares his digital techniques for painting World of Warcraft and StarCraft characters in a brand new painting, while on page 94 the talented Laurel D Austin reveals how she paints multiple StarCraft characters in a scene. There are plenty of new skills to master elsewhere this issue: on page 86 Annie Stegg shares her layer advice, while on page 98 Jessica Oyhenart mixes her historical references. Don't miss Painter Wow! author Cher Threinen-Pendarvis's guide to Painter 12's workspaces on page 85.

Finally, thanks for all your feedback over the past few editions of ImagineFX. I always love to hear from you, so please get in touch with your thoughts, questions or just to share your art!

Ian Dean, Editor
ian.dean@futurenet.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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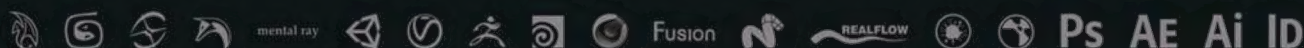
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ImagineFX Cover artist

One of Blizzard's most popular artists, Glenn Rane paints his new interpretation of World of Warcraft's Jaina Proudmoore



Glenn Rane

COUNTRY: US

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

WEB: www.glenrrane.com

Glenn is art lead of creative development at Blizzard, painting and art directing box covers, website artwork, BlizzCon banners and (as you hold in your hands) magazine covers. He's one of Blizzard's most identifiable artists, and says you need to fit the Blizzard style before you land a job at the studio. "My natural style leaned heavily toward the Blizzard aesthetic," he says. "The biggest difference is that, before Blizzard, I actually used to draw characters without shoulder pads." ■

"My team and I have a duty to create artwork that shows the games and their characters in the best light. It can be a heavy responsibility at times."

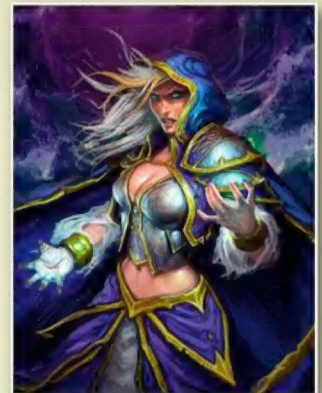


In progress

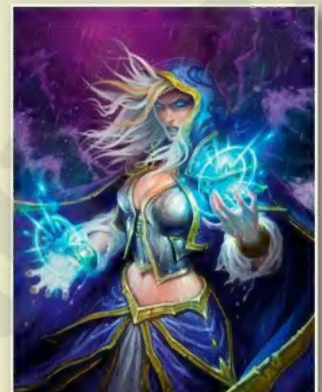
Our Warcraft cover star rocks out in the rain!



"Jaina was interested in peace between the Alliance and Horde for the longest time. The cover represents a breaking point for her where she has decided that enough's enough and wants to kick some ass. That was the thing that made this painting enjoyable - showing her dark side."



"Sometimes we feel that a character needs a level up. That's when we have a lot of room to explore an outfit upgrade. Jaina got a little bit of one in this piece, but we felt it was more important for people to still recognise her. It's really important for us to be consistent for our fans."



"For the image I wanted to create a stormy environment. By pumping up and sharpening the highlights, adding rivulets running down her body, and showing larger drips blowing off her hair and clothing, I tried to achieve that goal."



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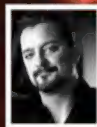
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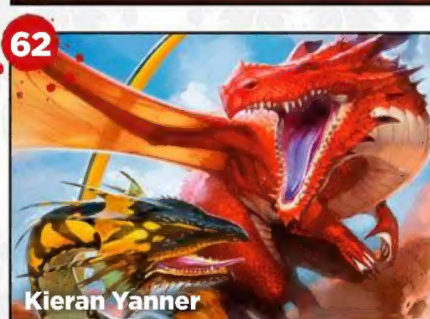
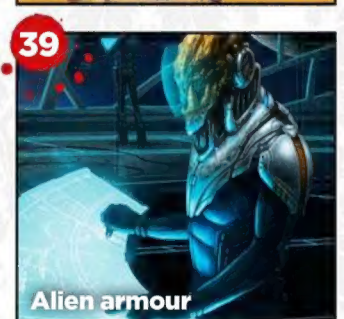
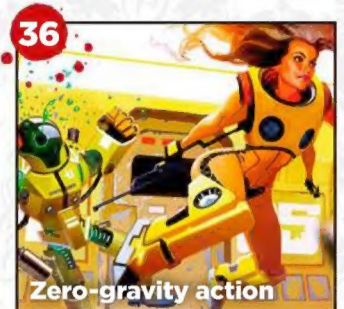
"The core of this project was soulful, but in terms of the wish list, we kind of went crazy"
Chris Metzen, Blizzard fine art project leader

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

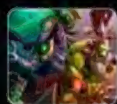


See page 8 for the best new art ➔

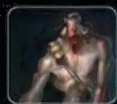


ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques from pro artists...



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Sam Didier depicts a video game combat scene.



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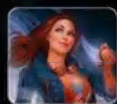
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Create like the pros, with Cher Threinen-Pendarvis.



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Annie Stegg uses layers to create multiple designs.



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Laurel D Austin paints StarCraft's characters.



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Jessica Oyhenart on using fashion history references.

Artist Q&A

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It's a sci-fi special! How to paint spaceship battles, sci-fi comics, speed paint faces, sci-fi horror and more.



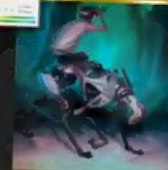
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How to watch your video workshops

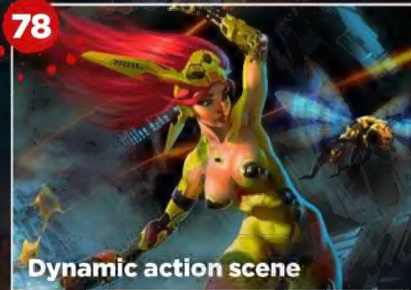
Where you see this badge you'll find an accompanying video workshop. Click the link to watch the artist at work.

WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/ifx90_mech2



78



Dynamic action scene

86



Costume concepts

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

Manuel Morgado

LOCATION: Portugal

WEB: www.manuelmorgado.com

EMAIL: mail@manuelmorgado.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Working as a professional illustrator since 2003, Manuel's distinctive and crisp style has caught the eye of many newspapers, magazines and publishers in his native Portugal. He's inspired by modern music, film and comic book art, and strives to incorporate diverse tastes into his work. "Even though I love modern illustration, I'm still inspired by the masters of baroque and the Renaissance, like Caravaggio, Rubens and Vermeer."

Keen for a new challenge, Manuel is hoping to get the chance to take his art overseas. "Even though I've been lucky enough to gain experience in my homeland, I would love the chance to create work for an international client."

1 FAUN "For this piece, I wanted to tell the story of a lady who becomes lost in an enchanted forest, and is captured by a faun. I didn't want it to be clear whether or not the faun was a friend or foe. I'll let the viewer decide..."

2 THE FIGHT "Dragons and warriors are two of my favourite things! For this image, I wanted to depict a battle between warriors and a dragon. I was keen for the warriors to look as though they were defending their fortress from the dragon's fire."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Manuel - you've won yourself a copy of *Exposé 10* and *d'artiste: Character Design*! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



ImagineFX Christmas 2012

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Regular ImagineFX artist Jonathan Standing salutes Manuel's use of the Airbrush tool...



"Manuel's work is a refreshing throwback to a younger time in fantasy illustration; his work has strong pop-culture influences and there's a sense of fun in his costumes and characters."

Francis Merlino F. Monge

LOCATION: Philippines
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



For Francis, art was as much a part of growing up as it was about getting into trouble with his parents. "My parents didn't agree with me drawing. Back in those days, it wasn't practical to pursue a career in the arts because of the lack of opportunities and expensive art school fees." This didn't stop the determined young Francis, as he and his friends formed an art group at school. "We used to cover our notebooks in drawings - we all loved it, but unfortunately, it only ever got us into trouble with our teachers!"

Luckily those days of art rebellion are gone, and Francis now works as a concept artist for an international game development company.

1



1 JAX THE BISON "Originally, I wanted to create a minotaur warrior, but then for some reason I saw a bison on a TV programme and went for that instead! I think it makes it a bit more unusual."

2 SURFING "For this piece I wanted to draw a fairy having fun in a gloomy environment. I think there's always fun to be found, wherever you are!"



2

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Francis's work may seem gloomy at first, but using glinting light to pick out detail not only introduces depth to his work, but also gives his characters an almost luminescent glow - a menacing effect for the minotaur"

Shona Cutt,
Designer

Mauricio Herrera Rojas

LOCATION: Mexico

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Since the mid-90s, Mauricio has been working as a professional illustrator for the trading card and video game industries. "My first big break came in 1999, when I became the graphic editor of the Myths and Legends trading card game series. Since then, I've worked on TCGs including Soul Calibur, Tekken and Warcraft, along with God of War: Chains of Olympus and the RPG Pathfinder."

It's plain to see why Mauricio's talents have attracted much attention from artists across the globe. "My art has served as a reference for a new generation of illustrators in Chile," he proudly says.

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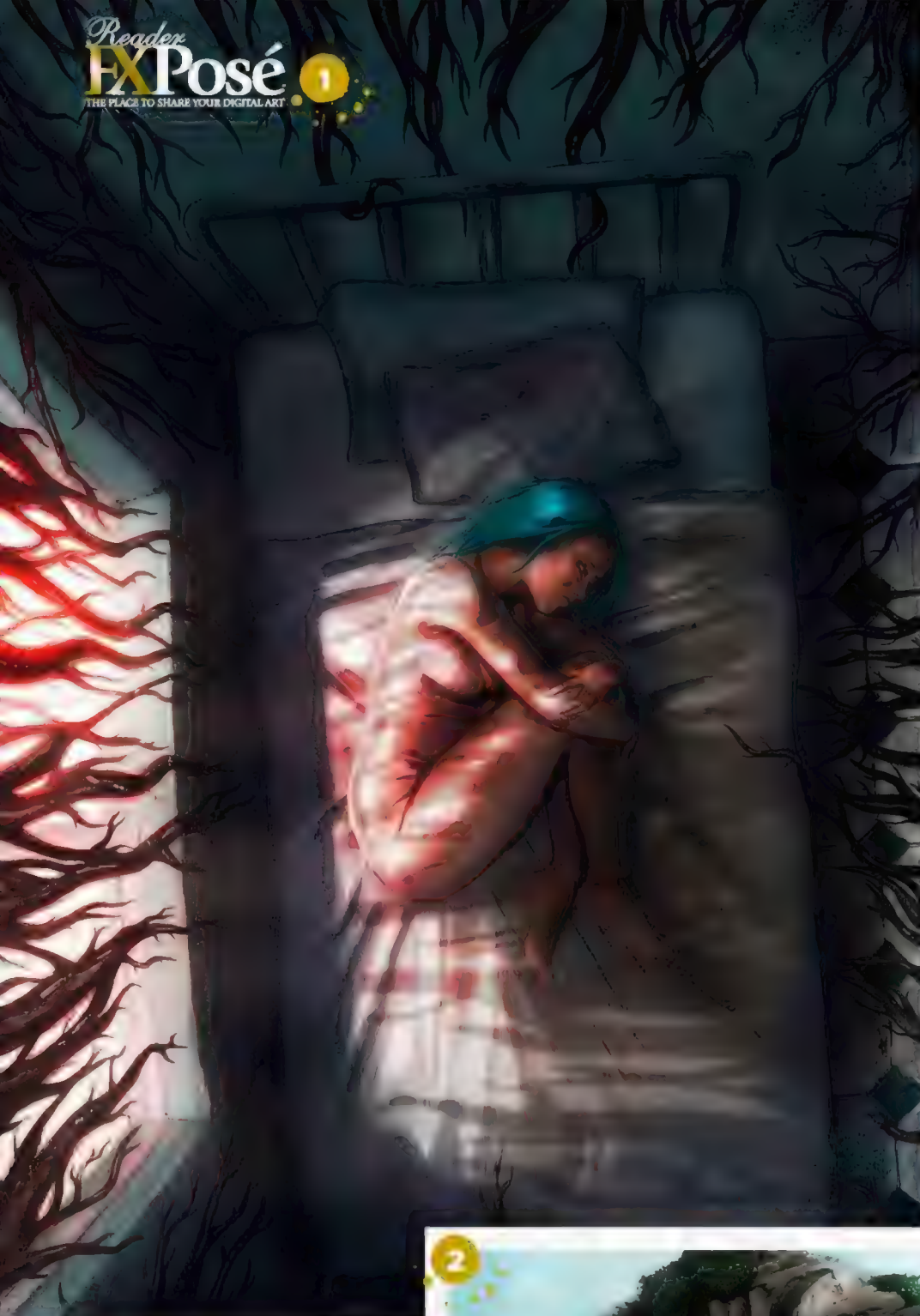


1 WAR "This image was made for a Darksiders art contest two years ago. Along with Simon Bisley, Joe Madureira is one of my main contemporary influences. This piece took over 20 hours of drawing and colouring time."

2 THOR "Over the past 10 years I've made many images of mythology for different TCG projects, and one of the reoccurring characters has been the god Thor. For my take on the character, I chose to emphasise his gloves and belt accessories that play a large part in the original mythology."

3 ZOMBIE PAC MAN "Prior to this piece I made several sketches of different horror situations, and then this idea just popped into my head!"





Gina Nelson

LOCATION: South Africa

WEB: www.ginanelsonart.com

EMAIL: ginanelson.art@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Over the past three years, Gina has turned her artistic talents to video games, tech demos and illustration, and is currently enjoying her time spent as a freelance illustrator and concept artist. "Art is my greatest passion – it always has been, and always will be!" Gina tells us.

Although much of the South African artist's work drifts into playful dark fantasy, Gina doesn't restrict herself to one style or genre. "I spend a great deal of my time working on personal illustrations and doing freelance work. I'm always striving to be a better artist and the only way to achieve that is by constantly drawing!"

1 PULP #4 "This cover was commissioned by a local South African comic publisher, GEP. This image was painted for its PULP series, which is an anthology of short horror stories. It's always fun to create wildly dramatic and gory images!"

2 ENVIRONMENT CONCEPT "I did this painting as a concept for an in-game environment that my friends and I were going to model. For some reason, we never managed to get past the concept phase and move on to the 3D modelling. There's still time though!"



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Gina's cover depicts a psychiatric ward straight out of Shock Corridor, decorated with the tentacle roots of a Body Snatcher. What's clever is the shot makes the viewer culpable in this horror show, perhaps the main threat."

Beren Neale,
Features Editor



Jeff Yen

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



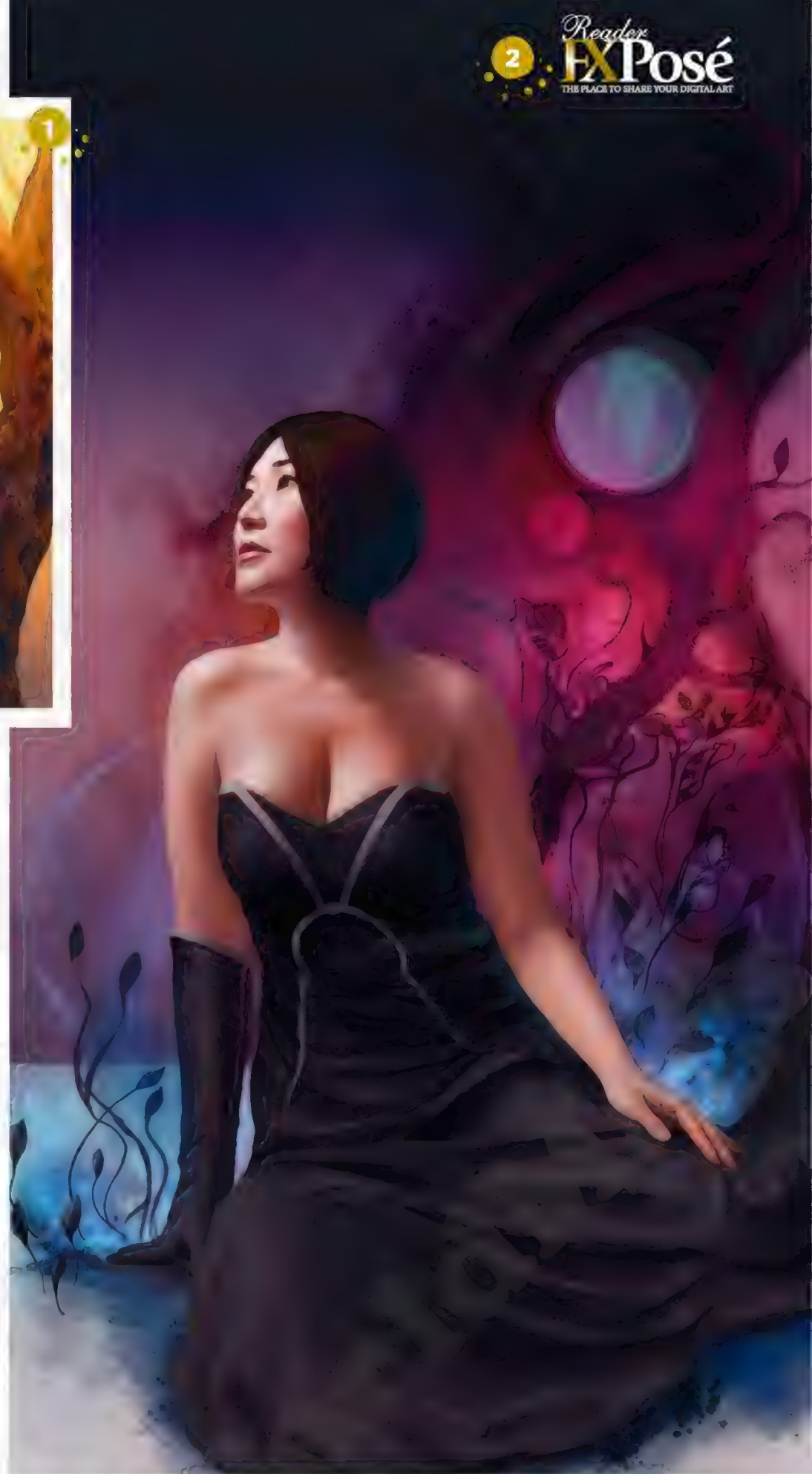
Many artists make the transition from traditional mediums to digital art, but it was the other way round for Jeff. "I started making

digital art before learning traditional mediums, but I appreciate both equally."

After graduating from the Fashion Institute of Technology, Jeff sees everything around him as a source of inspiration, along with historical greats including John Singer Sargent and John William Waterhouse. "I believe that artists should be able to find creative value from everything and anything, and not discriminate against other artists because of genre or technique." An excellent sentiment to live by, in our opinion.

1 RETURN "I painted this image a long time ago, but I wasn't happy with it so I reworked it. I don't like to look back on failures without taking another shot at it and I learnt a lot from it."

2 ABORIGINAL "I like to do very loose sketches and then quickly build to a finish in sections. Everything else becomes easier once I set a precedent in one area of the painting."





Samantha Mash

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.samanthamash.com

EMAIL: smash@pnca.edu

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



With studies at the Pacific Northwest College of Art drawing to a close in the near future, Samantha is ready to take her art to the next professional level. She's been dabbling in digital art since the age of 14, and has found a home with Photoshop within the past three years.

"Since then I've been near solely a digital artist. While I primarily work in the digital realm of illustration, I'm heavily influenced by art history - most notably Byzantine frescos, Neoclassical painters and more modern Japanese animation."

Another key influence to her work is a love of all things supernatural. "I love to introduce aspects of death and otherworldliness into otherwise lovely images, to mix the boundaries between completely aesthetic and creepy."

2



1 LIKE PUTTING WINGS ON LEAD

"I've always been fascinated with death, and have drawn many pieces that revolve around the act. This piece was part of a bigger series, bluntly titled *Death and Swans*."

2 FIX ME OR CONFLICT ME "The use of bold and graphic shapes is something that I use often in my work. I like how it contrasts against the fleshiness my figures often have."

3 A DEAD DECEMBER "I'm extremely fond of this piece. The palette, the figure and the environment just came together in a way I didn't expect and it just all worked out wonderfully."



"The sophistication of Samantha's work makes her creations all the more terrifying. With such bold silhouettes and calculated detailing, each image has a nightmarish presence of its own that lingers with you long after."



+ Sirkku Tuomela

LOCATION: Finland

WEB: www.sirkkusylvia.com

EMAIL: sirkku@sirkkusylvia.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"I found my way into digital art through image manipulation in a media school and by accidentally landing an internship as a 3D/motion graphics trainee in a TV post-production company," reveals Sirkku. She finally broke away from the 3D world in 2007. "I had so much 2D inside me that I wrote and painted a 100-page fantasy graphic novel, which came out in 2010. I'm finally able to work on book covers and game art, which has been my goal for a decade!"

1 BALLERINA AGAINST THE WORLD

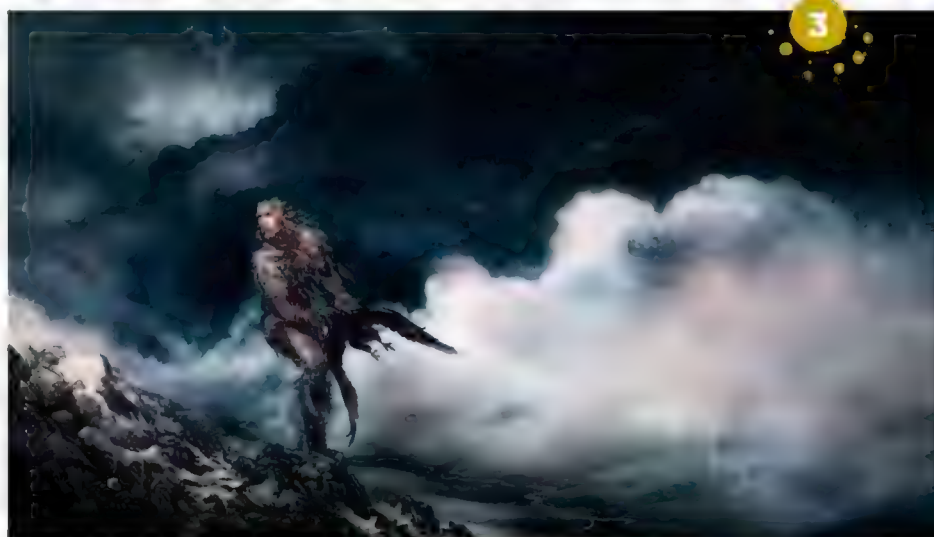
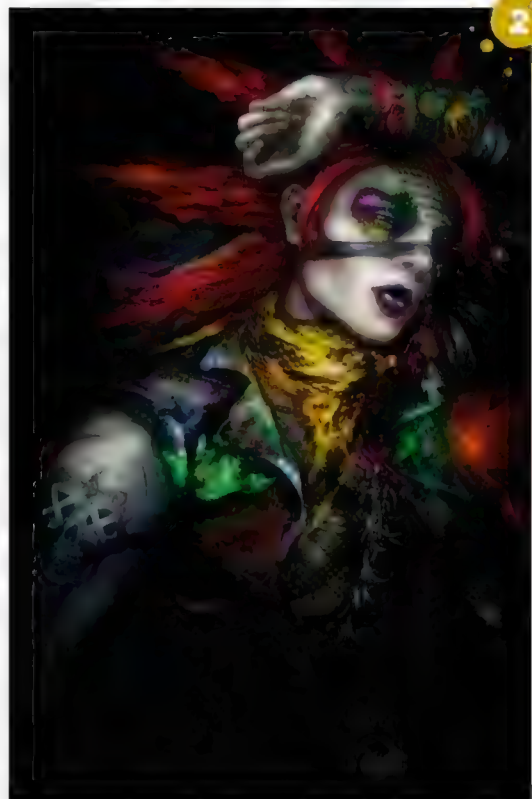
"Here, I wanted to depict contained and justified rage. The girl is physically weak, but psychologically will overcome any difficulties. That is what matters most - the will to live."

2 I AM GORGEOUS

"This is a nostalgic tribute to artists in both music and fashion - a punky Bowie came to mind! Art has so much power to give us, especially music."

3 LAST CHANCE THUNDERBIRD

"I was inspired by an article in ImagineFX on Howard Pyle. This is something that came out while trying to concentrate on a single clear emotion, simplifying the composition and colours with only that in mind."





IMAGINEFX

"Self-portraits can be a challenging and obstructive subject to paint, so to see Jeff tackle his with humour and confidence makes it all the more appealing. Pucker up!"

Jeff Herndon



Jeff Herndon

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.jeffherndon.com

EMAIL: jeff@jeffherndon.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop



When it comes to art, the one thing that overrides everything in Jeff's work is storytelling. "Much of my inspiration comes from the movies I loved as a kid, and I've been drawing since I was a small child."

Based in Fort Collins, Colorado, Jeff's imaginative creations have earned him a strong reputation as a freelance artist who puts his imagination to work with every stroke. "I've studied figure drawing, design and composition, but am happiest when all three come together in illustration." Even though much of his work is digital, Jeff remains an avid painter and is happy to keep experimenting with different mediums and new materials.



1 I FINALLY KISSED THE RIGHT FROG

"My girlfriend, now fiancée, came up with the idea to do our portraits in the classic princess and the frog scenario. This is quite possibly my best self-portrait."

2 GUN MASTER "This started out as a series of scribble and intersecting shapes. I was thinking that I needed to practise painting weapons so I turned those shapes into a big monster with a gun."

3 THE WOLFMAN'S CORRAL "I was really excited for the pose and to nail down the anatomy of this hulking wolf. As I got into the painting I realised the most satisfying part was the background, with the buttery, oil-like effect I had accidentally achieved."

Nuno 'Plati' Alves

LOCATION: Portugal

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EMAIL: nunoplati@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: SketchBook Pro,
Illustrator, Photoshop



With working for Marvel on a new comic based on the recent Ultimate Spider man cartoon, along with co-creating an upcoming comic book and freelancing on the side, Nuno is making a name for himself thanks to his unique and bold style.

"Since my work is heavily anchored on colour, I felt that digital art made more sense for me, and with skipping steps like scanning for example, the process has become more linear and streamlined, which really works for me!" Nuno hopes to continue to push his career as a comic book artist, and would love to create character designs for animation and video games.

1 MIA: BRIDGE "This is concept art from a creator-owned project I'm developing with my buddy, João Lemos, called Mia: Tales from the Lost Islands. Hopefully, it should be published soon in the States and in Europe."

2 BLACK WIDOW "I like creating stylised Art Deco-type illustrations for fun using Marvel characters. Here's my take on Black Widow."

3 ELEKTRA "And another one! I love creating highly stylised character portraits - this one is of Elektra."

4 BABE WARRIOR "I did this for fun as a breather in between sequential work. It's part of a set of illustrations that I intend to collect in a sketchbook this year. The concept is the very basic (but fun!) mix of pretty girls and sci-fi."

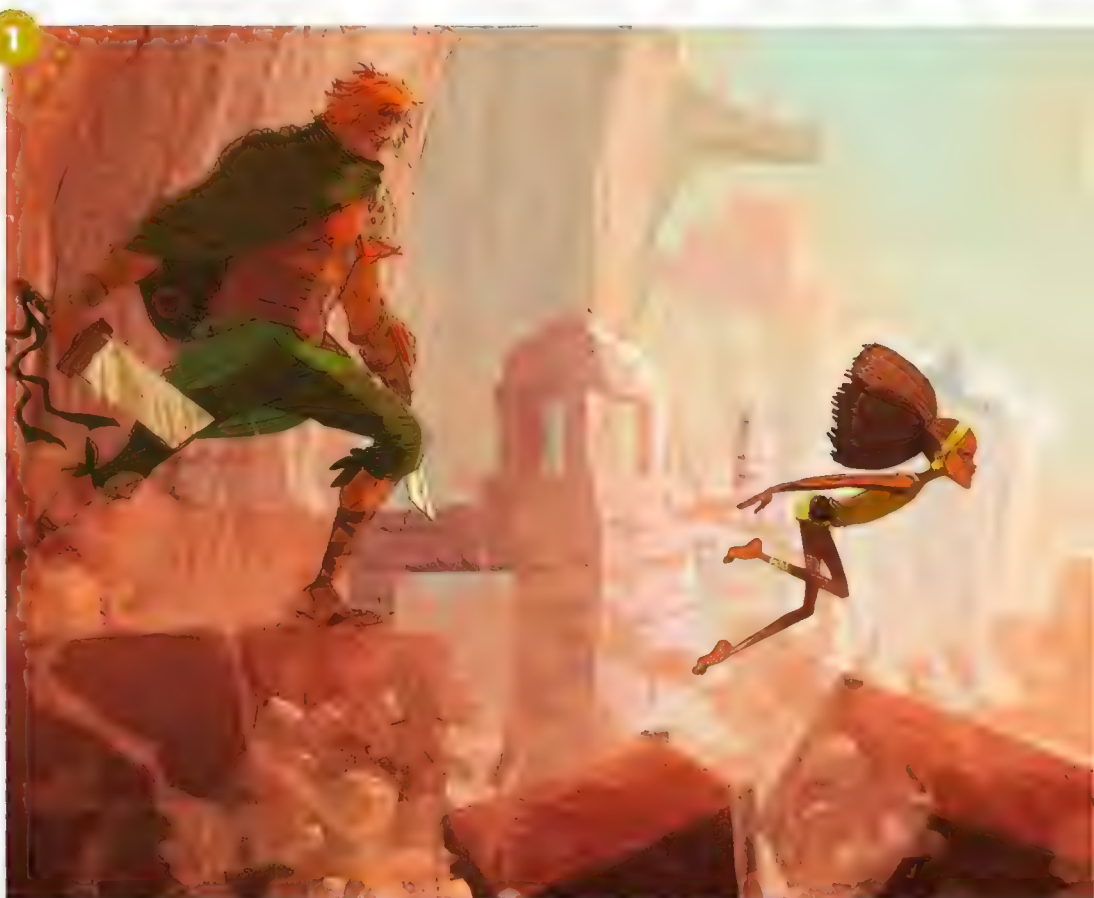
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You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them. fxpose@imaginefx.com

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IMAGINEFX ARTIST



"Nuno doesn't shy away from using colour in his art – and his chosen palettes suit his subjects perfectly, from his bold choices in his stylised Marvel prints to the more subdued hues in his atmospheric Mia: Bridge piece."

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY



It connects artists with specific visions to people with specific tastes – not so easy to do with traditional models

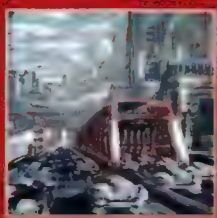
Sean Andrew Murray did over 10 years of work on The Book of Wizards before he turned to Kickstarter.





YOU BIG PIGGOTTY!

Illustrator Say Scatola's personal project, *The Ballad of Piggotty Wood*, a story for children and adults alike, has just been released as an iBook. **Page 24**



BACK TO THE FUTURE

"I had to create interesting shapes that would wow the audience." Legendary concept artist Stephan Martinière on remaking *Total Recall*. **Page 25**



FREIGHT CLUB

We'll wager our editor's house that concept artist Theo Prins has the most original office you've seen: on a container ship. How a boat that? **Page 26**

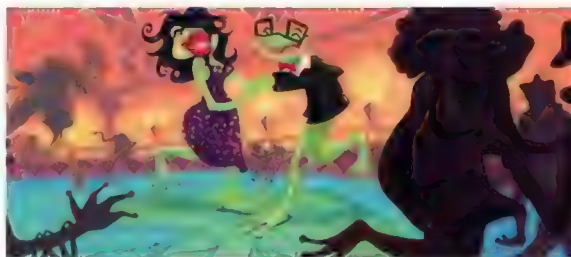
Kicking up a fuss

Flying start With the US phenomenon launching in the UK, we take a look at why Kickstarter has become everyone's favourite helping hand...



Since 2008, Kickstarter has successfully funded over 31,000 projects, and has become nothing short of a phenomenon with aspiring artists and professionals alike. Now launching in the UK, the investment platform is set to create new opportunities to get even more products off the ground.

So how does it work? The aim is to encourage users to donate funds to creative ventures. A project leader – say, an artist or an animator – will create a page showcasing their idea and make a case for why it's worth backing. A deadline to raise a specified goal

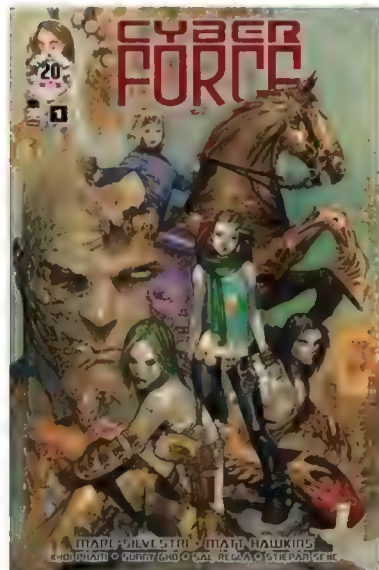


is set, reflecting the amount needed to move to the next development phase. It's then opened to users to pledge money, which is only charged when the fund goal is reached. As with all investment plans, it's a gamble – things can, and do, go wrong – so do your research before taking the plunge.

Even the biggest companies are at it. Top Cow's Marc Silvestri and Matt Hawkins used Kickstarter to relaunch comic series *Cyber Force* (see sidebar), and were the first major comic publisher to generate funds to create a free, five-part comic series to entice newcomers to the comic scene.

Kickstarter can provide opportunities to explore personal projects that may otherwise be near-impossible. Concept artist Sean Andrew Murray turned to the website with his personal storybook project, *The Book of Wizards*. "It seemed like the perfect way to put my ideas out there, to present my vision and see if anyone cared." People did care: Sean received twice the amount of his fund goal, which will now enable the book to be released in the summer.

Stop-motion animation *Frog Bar* recently tried to get start-up funding from Kickstarter.



Cyber Force used Kickstarter to bridge the gap between established comic fans and newcomers.

MATT HAWKINS

Top Cow president and *Cyber Force* co-writer talks Kickstarter

Why did you choose to use Kickstarter to launch the *Cyber Force* project?

We wanted to give away the first five issues of a new comic series for free. We'd be unable to do that on our own, so we used the Kickstarter model to enable fans to help us do it. The intent was always to give it away for free – no one had done that yet and we wanted to try it. It was a bit of a gamble and our own retail community was wary about it at first, but we were able to smooth that out eventually.

Would you say that Kickstarter is playing an important part in the changing shape of the comic book industry?

I think it can change things somewhat, but I don't know to what extent. Crowdsourcing allows fans to help pick what content they support and not just have the big media companies pushing what they think we want. I've watched a lot of Kickstarters fail to raise their money, which pretty much kills the project it was trying to support. It's a lot riskier than people think.

The *Cyber Force* project looks like a fascinating way to introduce new readers to comic books.

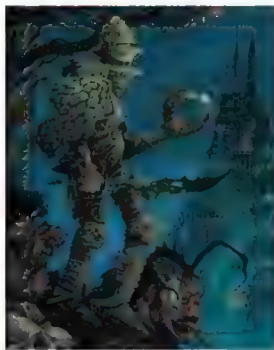
The book was designed as a jumping on point for new readers. Comics have a (deserved) bad rap for difficult barriers to entry on long-arching stories. It's hard to jump on a long-running title and the soap opera-type stuff makes it difficult to figure out what's going on. *Cyber Force* is very topical in theme and deals with technology, obsolescence, cybernetic implants and neural networks. Lots of fun stuff!



Matt Hawkins is president and chief operating officer of Top Cow. Its free comic, *Cyber Force*, is available now.

www.topcow.com

Continued from previous page...



Sean's The Book of Wizards is the first book of a series that dives into the magical world of Gateway.

A successful project is as much about emotional satisfaction as it is about business, as Sean points out. "It connects artists with specific visions to people who have specific tastes – something not as easy to do with the traditional model of small-business loans or artist grants."


Along with established artists, aspiring creators are turning to the site to get themselves and their ideas out into the



public. However, Andy Wood, producer of stop-motion animation Frog Bar, says it's

unwise for creators to place all hopes of funding on Kickstarter. "It was definitely our first option when the budgetary discussion came up, but we also have a plan B and plan C that could get us our funding."

Frog Bar is a collaborative project between Industrial Light and Magic's Nick Walker and the students at the Academy of Art University, San Francisco, where Andy studies animation and visual effects. "The brilliant thing about Kickstarter is that it's as much a promotional tool as a funding tool," Andy tells us. "With being students, many of us can't contribute to our budget, but we've developed a huge fan-base already."

It's clear that Kickstarter presents many new possibilities for the creative arts, whatever the funding outcome. Whether it's personal fulfilment, industry innovation or anything in between, Kickstarter definitely has a part to play. 

A thoroughly British occasion

Spotlight The first British Comic Awards are approaching – a great sign for the UK comics industry



Flying the flag for homegrown comic book talent, the first annual British Comic Awards will take place on 17 November at the Royal Armouries Bury Theatre, Leeds. The ceremony coincides with the Thought Bubble Festival and aims to showcase the achievements of the talented artists who drive the UK comic scene.

Andrew Tunney, creator of Girl & Boy, is as excited about the prospects of the BCAs as he is about being nominated for Best Comic. "For decades, the UK has consistently produced some of the best comic creating talent in the world and it's about time we stood on our own and recognised that," he says.



Fellow nominee and Hemlock artist Josceline Fenton hopes that over time, the awards will help boost UK comics popularity. "I hope it will go some way to putting comics in the public eye and getting more people reading!" We sincerely hope so too.

Find out more at www.britishcomicawards.com.



The wildly creative Hemlock, by Josceline Fenton, follows the bizarre adventures of Lumi the witch.



Andrew Tunney's Girl & Boy tackles mature relationship themes through a young crime-fighting couple.

Painting in pixels

On display Some of the finest video game concept artists around feature in a new exhibition

Over recent years, video games concept art has finally gained recognition by wider audiences for being masterpieces in their own right. So much so, that forward-thinking art galleries and museums - like the Riverside Art Museum in California - are keen to showcase some of the finest pieces of concept art the industry has to offer.

And that's exactly what RAM's Painting in Pixels: An Exhibition of Concept Art is doing right this moment. Open from September until 10 January 2013, the impressive collection features many extraordinary pieces of character, creature, environment and vehicle concepts created for various video game titles.

"It's really exciting to bring concept art to a museum,"

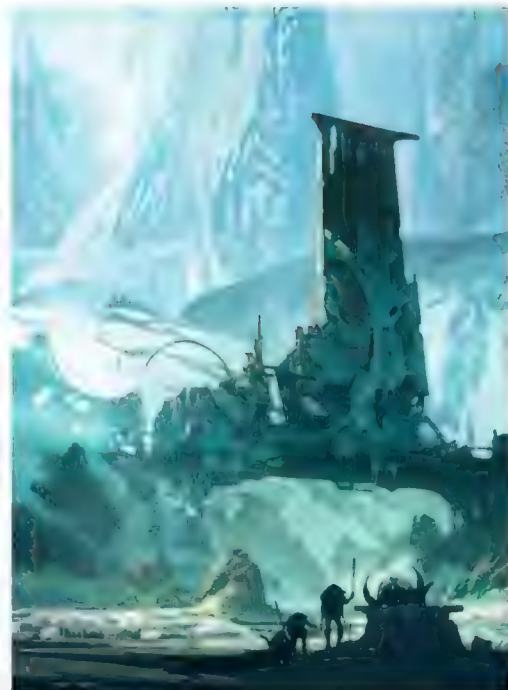


exhibition co-curator Nicole West tells us, "not only to showcase such incredible talent, but also to share the process and purpose of concept art within the entertainment industry."

For aspiring concept artists and appreciators of art alike, we recommend you catch the exhibition while you can.

Visit www.riversideartmuseum.org for more details.

Each piece has been handpicked to highlight the flourishing artistic talents within the games industry.



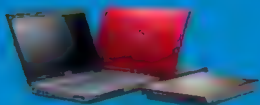
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In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



Promotion Corel cash

Corel has launched an cash-back deal for CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X6. Until 31 January 2013, customers

buying the full standard version are entitled to receive £90 cash-back when ordered through their website or an authorised retailer. More details at www.corel.com.

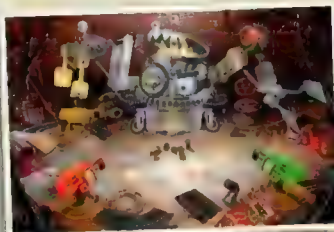


Interview Dishonored

One of the core design principals behind Dishonored was to imagine how a modern creation could be replicated with old technology. "I told every artist to take reference of a modern vehicle, and imagine someone trying to make the same thing in 1750," says art director Sebastien Mitton. Read our full interview with Sebastien and Viktor Antonov at www.imaginefx.com.

Interview Sackboy

"The LittleBigPlanet aesthetic is based on telling a story on a shallow stage. So what happens when you try to have the same aesthetic in a wide-open space?" asks Greg Juby, art director of LBP Karting. Discover Greg's solution in our special interview and concept art over at www.imaginefx.com.



Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"I'm watching two of the most badass swordsmen in the Blizzard universes getting ganged up on by little mechanical drones"

Sam Didier spots a flaw in his art, and comes up with a subtle solution: two-headed ogres! See page 70



ArtRage proved to be the ideal platform to bring Sav's tale to life, and with stunning effect. Check out the high-resolution trailer on his site.



Beautiful ballad

Story time After freelancing for the past 15 years, Sav Scatola lets his creativity run amok among the wilds of Piggotty Wood...



Finding the time to fulfill personal projects while freelancing can be tough, but the results are often worth the extra stress. Such is the case for illustrator Sav Scatola, with the completion of his own project, The Ballad of Piggotty Wood.

Recently released as an Apple iBook, The Ballad of Piggotty Wood is a storybook for children and adults alike, telling the tale of Little Badge Joe after a series of events

change his life. Sav's refined style found a home with ArtRage in bringing Piggotty Wood to life. "ArtRage just felt right for this project. I think there's an uncluttered elegance to the toolset which allows you to concentrate on the simple act of creating."

Sav hopes to expand the world of Piggotty Wood further with future projects. "As it stands, the story is ripe for expansion and at least two more books come to mind right away!" Visit www.boxy.co.uk to find out more about Piggotty Wood.



Rewriting the past

Total mastery It takes a special calibre of artist to reinvent a classic. Step forward Stephan Martinière...



"It was clear from the start that this would be very different from the original film," legendary concept artist Stephan Martinière

tells us about taking on the task of reinventing the cityscapes of United Britain for Len Wiseman's remake of 1990's classic *Total Recall*.

Having created concept art for the likes of *TRON: Legacy* and *The Fifth Element*, Stephan's unparalleled ability to create enthralling futuristic visions rendered him the right man for the job. "From a creative

perspective, it's always a lot more interesting and challenging to create new environments and come up with new ideas." With the ambitious scope of *Total Recall*, a major challenge for Stephan was maintaining balance between dizzying scale and visual cohesion. "There was so much going on architecturally that it could have turned into chaos. I had to carefully create interesting and modern shapes and organise them into a city that would ultimately wow the audience."

Total Recall is released on DVD and Blu-ray this December, and you can enjoy more of Stephan's work at www.martiniere.com.

The scale of the environments that Stephan had to recreate posed an exciting challenge for the artist.



Stephan's concept art takes into account technical realities as well as inspired stylistic flair.

A: Images on this page © Columbia Pictures



The attention to detail crafted into each concept image is nothing short of staggering.



+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Isikol

www.isikol.deviantart.com

The humble Grecian artist is certainly one to watch: although currently working as a professional digital artist, Isikol hopes to one day join a major comics company. With a superhero portfolio as eye-catching as his, we're confident that those dreams will soon become a reality.



Cat-Meff

www.cat-meff.deviantart.com

Now here's someone who clearly likes to mix things up a bit. We can't think of many other places you would find a sci-fi Ezio Auditore (of Assassin's Creed fame) rubbing shoulders with hellhounds, slick mechs and Sonic the Hedgehog. This lady's got imagination - we like what we see!

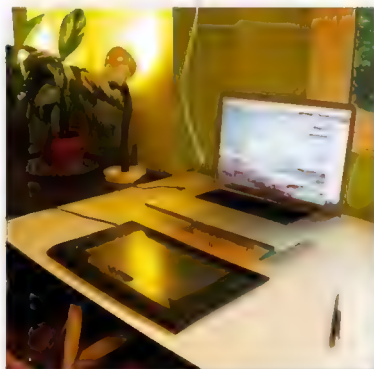


sanguisGelidus

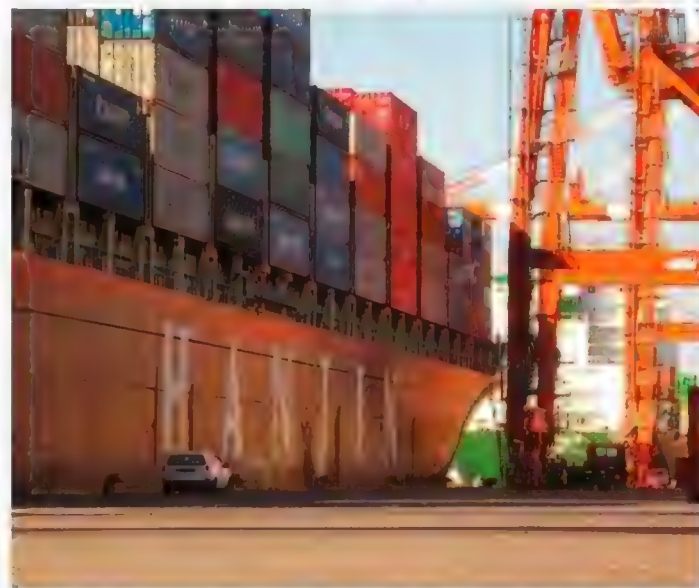
www.bit.ly/ifx-jonas

More commonly known as Jonas Jödicke, this collection of work boasts several interesting reinterpretations of classic characters from Eastern and Western animation, along with many more bold and colourful fantasy pieces. It's a wonderfully versatile and striking portfolio.

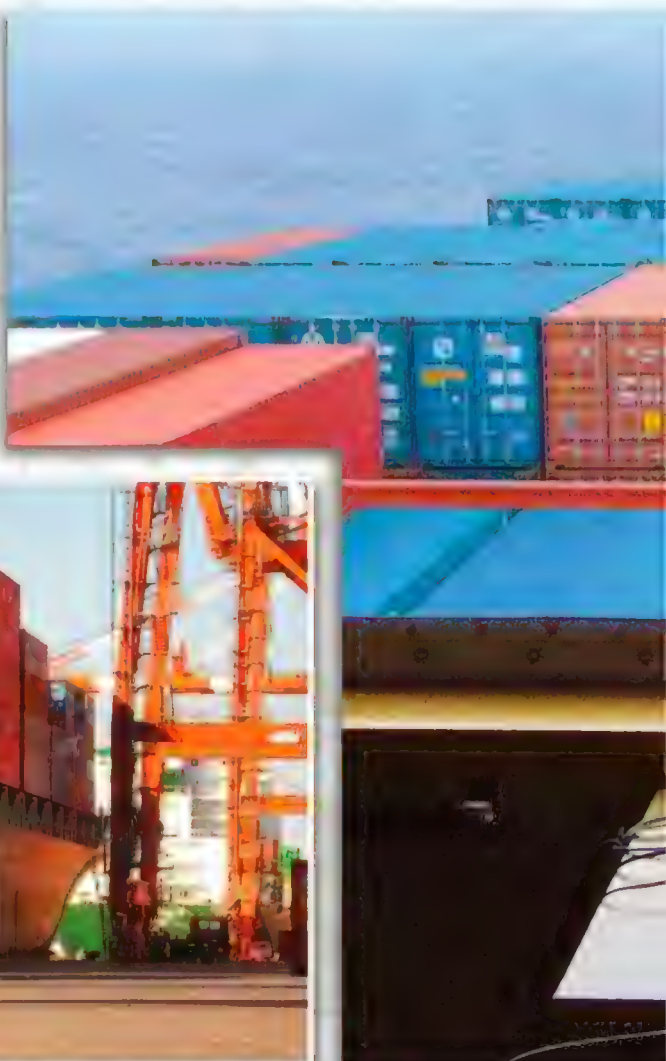
My current set-up at home: the same trusty tools. I like to keep my space simple and on a small scale. When there's room for things to pile up, they do.



Here's the ship docked in Tokyo. I was always surprised by how massive it felt each time I had a chance to see it from the dock. Above my head the gantry cranes were unloading containers.



Life on board was wonderfully simple. All thoughts were geared towards my project. I wasn't in a big, distracting city. There was nothing more to do than sit, work and watch the ocean. And occasional walks to the bow of the ship.



There's a grip matt under my computer. The ship was in constant motion, rolling and pitching back and forth, sometimes surprisingly far for a ship this size.

Theo Prins

Traveller's tales For concept artist Theo Prins, nothing is more inspirational than taking his studio on the road... or sea!



My studio space hasn't had any clear boundaries ever since I became comfortable taking my laptop and Wacom tablet around without the worry of damaging them. Since then, I've found that some of my most productive sessions have been while sitting in a cosy café or a library, soaking up the atmosphere while I work.

Several years ago, a very liberating thought crept up on me: why don't I take my laptop and Wacom tablet, put them in a backpack and just start travelling? I had steady freelance work at the time, regular weekly assignments, and there was no reason to be staying put in the US. I might as well be anywhere in the world!

Within a short while, I found myself boarding a Hong Kong-bound container

Artist news, software & events

The painting on my screen is an image I'd been working on before, and during, this trip. I've been inspired by harbours and container ships for years, so this voyage was fuel for an ongoing fascination.

Precisely timed sips of Earl Grey tea kept me on schedule with my freelance work.

Although it's hard to pick up a sense of scale, I'm 10 stories above sea level here. The ship seemed to move very slowly from this vantage point. I'd have to look at the map to remind myself we were travelling about 500 miles per day.



ship in San Francisco. I was the only passenger on board and had a sizable freelance assignment in hand to keep me occupied during the voyage.

In the photo above, you can see my studio space on board the Hanjin Phoenix: an open desk at the bridge of the ship. At the time we were somewhere south of the Aleutian Islands on our way to Tokyo. To my right and left were doors leading out to the bridge wings where I could catch refreshing face-battering winds and salt spray to wake me up each morning.

After arriving in Hong Kong, my mobile studio gave way to a one-and-a-half-year journey through Asia. I worked on the go and settled down for a few months wherever I could find a desk and a power outlet in an inspiring spot. I'm now back in the US, equally excited to have started a new adventure as an artist at ArenaNet.

Theo is a concept artist at ArenaNet, who incorporates travel into his creative process.

Visit www.theoprins.com for more.



Here's a closer look at Theo's painting from his laptop desktop. The artist has a long-held fascination with ship life and especially container ships. We wonder how much art has been created on them down the years?

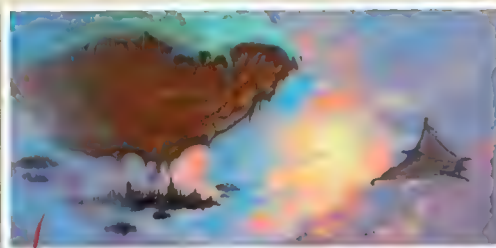
FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX Forum
Winners

Image of the month

Land ahoy! The palpable sense of child-like wonder is what makes Vince Hewitt's piece so compelling...

It's interesting to see how the city developed as the image became more complete.

Even the smallest of details have been fully considered by Vince to fuel the overall sense of discovery.



We sense that Vince drew on past experiences of family days out to create this month's winning image. "It's always exciting to visit the big city, especially when that city is floating in the clouds and you're arriving on a cobbled together, home-made flying rock."

"I wanted the viewer to experience this in some way, hence the 'over the shoulder' view of the new arrivals. The children are there for much the same reason: while painting this, I could imagine their youthful excitement as they approached the harbour."

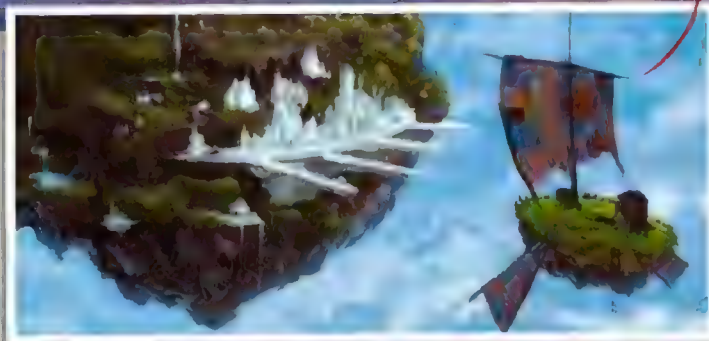
Vince also reveals that, "it's really useful to get feedback from the other artists on the forum, and this picture benefited greatly from it!"

MYFX TITLE: **The Sky Harbour**

WINNER: **Vince Hewitt (Midscrawl)**

GALLERY: www.midscrawl.deviantart.com

ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfxmay



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Witnessing this painting develop from initial concepts to the final image was a real pleasure. The numerous layers, reflected lighting, atmosphere and the sheer amount of stunning details all came together to achieve a beautiful fantasy."

Vincent Oregon (Vinnie)



MYFX TITLE: The Rainforest Man-eater
WINNER: Heather Cullymore (HeatherC))
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ix-heatherc
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx293

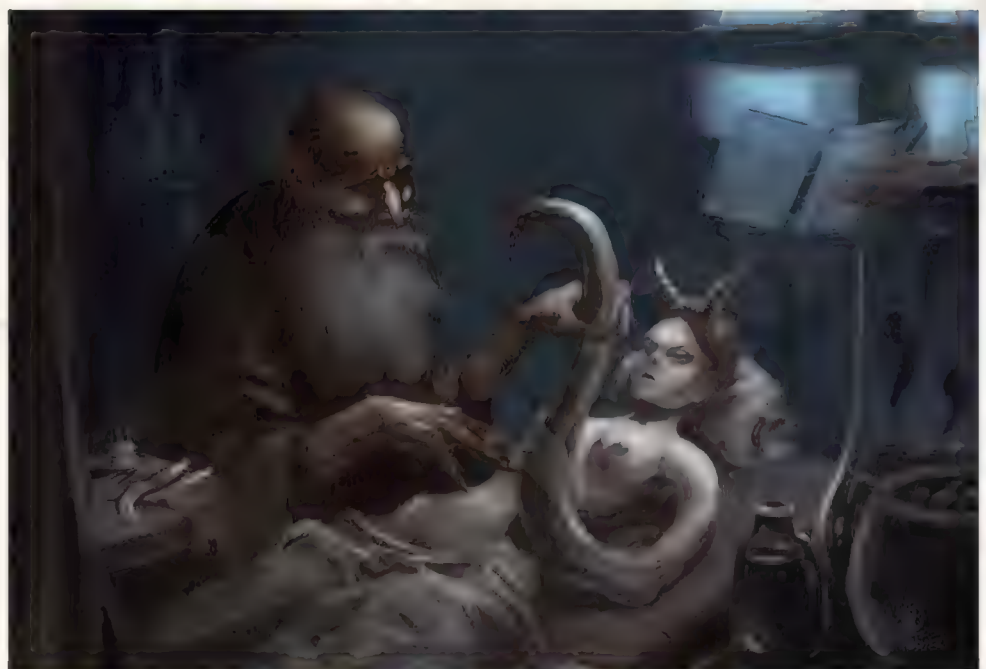


"This theme gave me a chance to do lots of research on strange and unusual plant life. I wanted to focus on making my plant creature believable, and so she's based on the very real yet harmless bat orchid. Careful exaggeration of natural and unnatural elements coupled with the lush rainforest environment gave birth to my Man-eater and all of her terrifying beauty."

MYFX TITLE: With Science
WINNER: Varuna Darensbourg (adventuregoat)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/adventuregoat
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfxjuly



"I was inspired to create something resembling an old Da Vinci sketch, along with creepy old baroque paintings as the image evolved. I was excited to develop something with an aesthetic that recalled the imagery associated with early scientific exploration. I think the image works because there are just enough details and clues for viewers to explore and piece together a story."



Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



MYFX TITLE: Baby Boom
WINNER: Matthew Grainger (Disco Matt)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/discomatt_sketchbook
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx289



"For a while, I had really wanted to paint a minotaur, and when I saw this challenge, a baby one seemed just too good not to paint! I was determined not to get too bogged down with the more 'techy' aspect of working in Photoshop, and painted the majority of it on one layer. The part I really like about this piece is that I wanted my minotaur baby to be in a dingy, dungeon-style location where he's totally at home."

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Ian Dean, on ian.dean@futurenet.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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Art trader

I'm looking to start a market stall selling graphic design and illustration prints, including that of concept artists. I was also looking to set up a Facebook page for this, promoting the artists's work. Can you give me some advice on where to look for up-and-coming artists? How to keep ahead of the curve? I realise this may be a bit of a trade secret, so I fully understand if you can't help. But thanks for your time anyway!

Alex Krofchak, via email

Ian replies: First, you must get the artist's permission before you do anything with art you find online. Artists hold the copyright to their work so please don't sell anything without permission. Other than that, read ImagineFX! Every issue is overflowing with great new artists who supply their contact details. Also, why not join our website (www.imaginefx.com) and discover some new talented artists.

When to use 3D?

I'd like to add to your response in a letter in issue 88 on the use of 3D software in fantasy art and digital painting. I use Poser a lot in my art, especially as a base for digital painting. It speeds up the process of drawing posed figures and for lighting reference. 3D software plays an important role in fantasy art. I look at Poser and DAZ Studio as virtual photography tools.

The Poser artist is looked at as being less creative. We can't all be modellers and



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 89?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 57 for details on how to get hold of one.

Here's an example of how Feysal used a DAZ 3D model in Poser, before painting it in Photoshop.



Taiwanese reader Chen picked up our Anatomy special for inspiration. Now all he needs to do is practise his art.

texture artists. Some of us are virtual photographers who pose models, light them and render them, either to be used in digital painting work or just as clean retouched renders. Is a photographer less creative because he doesn't create his models?

Please visit my deviantART page to see how I've used 3D software in my digital art: www.bit.ly/ifx-feysal.

Feysal Anthony Nair, via email

Ian replies: Should art be limited? That's the nub of the question. All artists approach a painting in different ways, so is using Poser a replacement for life drawing? Which leads us neatly into Chen's letter...

New face

I recently bought your human and animal structure bookazine, but I'm still confused and don't know how to progress with painting figures and anatomy. I have never studied painting before, but after I bought the book my first step is to learn to paint. Is there any special way to make me progress?

Chen, via email

Ian replies: The easy answer is practise. Do any readers have simple exercises to help Chen develop his painting?

Digital enhancements

I'm a long-time reader. I love the magazine, and recently I've been buying ImagineFX for my iPad. I must say, I love it! I've noticed lots of new features that the print editions didn't have. As well as the videos, I particularly like the extra galleries of art that accompany many of the articles. What else can I expect from my new ImagineFX?

Darren Ng, via email

Ian replies: Thanks for noticing! We try to add as much value to each edition of ImagineFX, be it digital or print. Currently the iPad enables us to add plenty of extra content that we hope to roll out to Zinio and Kindle (in the new year).



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A frustrated Painter user...

I've been an avid reader of ImagineFX for several years now, beginning in the US and continuing in France. I find that the magazine is one of the few places where I get new information in every issue.

I've noticed the magazine concentrates on Photoshop in the majority of examples. I do use Photoshop but mainly, due to my background, I use it in combination with Painter. I see little representation of Painter-produced art. Are there not contemporary artists using the program? Or is the magazine preferential to Photoshop?

I was just wondering if we need another Photoshop exclusive publication? I love the magazine and as I said, I do get something valuable from every issue.

Norm Hill, via email

Ian replies: Hello Norm. Despite the recent lack of Painter workshops I'm glad you still like us and find something useful in every issue. We do try and maintain the variety of content, from Simon Webber's 'Brush tutorial to the recent Painter S&A core skills. And we have recently had a series of skills articles from Painter World author Chris Threlkorn-Pendervill. However, we always want to please our readers, so I have more Painter tutorials planned for future issues - please keep reading! As a point of interest, what other software do readers want to see covered in the magazine?



In issue 82 Paul Phippen created this atmospheric scene of a crashed spacecraft using Painter.

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Please note: Disc content is now available from issue 85 onwards.

Christmas 2012 **ImagineFX**



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Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."

Andrew Jones, concept artist



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."

Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel

Paco Rico Torres
Paco is a freelance digital artist from Spain who's worked for several big game companies. He's also a writer and a teacher.

Mark Molnar
Mark is a concept and visual development artist who's worked for several big game companies. He's also a writer and a teacher.

Bill Corbett
Bill works as a freelance digital artist and a teacher. He's also a writer and a teacher.

Francesco Lorenzetti
Francesco works as a freelance digital artist and a teacher. He's also a writer and a teacher.

Paul Tysall
Paul has 10 years of experience as a digital artist and a teacher. He's also a writer and a teacher.

Melanie Delon
Melanie is a freelance digital artist and a teacher. She's also a writer and a teacher.

Nick Harris
Nick is a freelance digital artist and a teacher. He's also a writer and a teacher.

Question

How can I create a giant space battle without becoming bogged down in the details?

Rickie Walker, US

Answer

Paco replies

When you're painting a large-scale, action-packed scene such as a space battle, invariably the details of the ships aren't the most important aspect of the final image. Instead, it's crucial to lay down an engaging composition.

You need to show depth to make the image interesting. Space is infinite, so play around with the elements in the fore-, mid- and background so that the viewer has some distance references. This usually means giving some ships in the foreground more detail, such as mechanical elements, interesting paintwork or visible pilots. But what if you don't have time to do this?

Well, there are different approaches that you can take, but perhaps the easiest one is to use textures. Just create a basic shape for the spaceship and once you have something that you're happy with, look for different photos of real-life objects that can be fashioned to look like part of a ship, such as a building, a factory or an engine. Paste them over your painting with some creativity, and add a suitable paint scheme to unify the whole thing. This enables you to create interesting-looking ships without spending too much time thinking about the actual details.

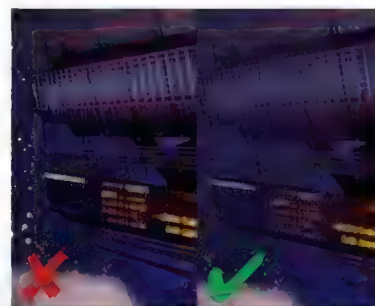


A strong composition will let you get away with including less-detailed individual elements, such as the smaller spaceships seen here.

Artist's secret

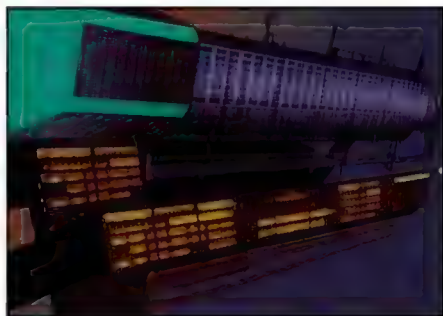
THE LOCK TRANSPARENT PIXELS OPTION

If you want to include more detail on your spaceships, try using selection or the lock Pixels option. Doing this means you won't accidentally paint outside the silhouette of the ship so its edges will stay clean and sharp.



To increase the sensation of depth, simply reduce the contrast on the most distant parts of the image.

Step-by-step: Compose an epic conflict in space



- 1 After doodling a thumbnail of the image, I create a rough structure for the main ship, which is the focus of the whole composition. I use 3ds Max to create a basic skeleton for the ship as a guide before starting to paint. Then I paste on textures of different elements. It's a bit like making a puzzle.



- 2 When creating the smaller ships, the key is to focus on the silhouette and the light. I draw a basic silhouette and use it for all the small ships in the mid- and background, adding slightly more detail to the ones nearest the viewer. In the distance, a silhouette and the light of an engine is all you need to depict a ship.



- 3 Now it's just a matter of mixing it all together – painting the light effects and additional elements. This may not be the best way of painting a spaceship but it's the easiest and fastest that I can think of. There are many websites where you can get hold of textures for free, but remember that you can always make your own.

Question

I want to give my sci-fi vehicles a more lived-in feel – do you have any suggestions?

Vic Howse, England



These designs always work best when you have your tongue firmly placed inside your cheek.

Answer Paul replies



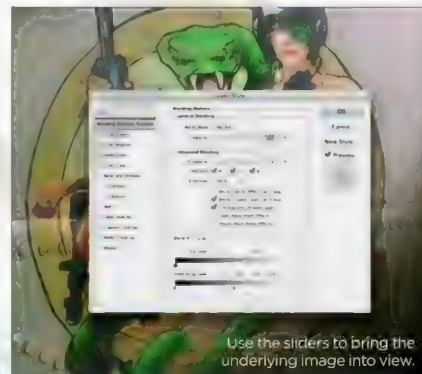
It's the details that sell any story, and good attention to detail is a great way to demonstrate how deeply you've considered the day-to-day use of a vehicle. Think about the relationship people have with their vehicles. When people adopt something they go to great lengths to make it a personal extension of themselves, taking great pride in what they 'do' and what they 'do it' with. So try personalising your creations.

One of my favourite solutions happens to combine my passion for pin-up art: nose art. Dating back to World War I, nose art was not only a form of expression that contravened military dogma, it was also a pragmatic way to spot friendly aircraft in the confusion of aerial dogfighting. By World War II these paintings had evolved to include the pin-up art that was emerging, via advertising, in civilian life. Often based on those 'good girls back home', plane crews took great pride in their nose art, and many considered them to be vital good luck charms. This practice still continues today, regardless of what the Brass thinks to it.

Seeing as you're reading this magazine I'm going to take a gamble and suggest you've already painted a rather stunning piece of pin-up art, or have a painting with an attractive female (or male!) character in it. Photoshop it onto the side of one of your vehicle designs and use my quick

and easy process to finish the job: With your custom art on a layer above your vehicle art, double-click the Layers icon to bring up the Layer Style Blending Options. Below the Blend If tool are some sliders. Start to drag the Underlying Layer triangles along the gradient and you'll begin to see parts of the underlying image fragment through from beneath your design. To enhance this effect hold down Alt and click in the middle of each triangle you've moved. This splits the slider, enabling you to have greater control over the subtlety of the blend.

Try this process for yourself and perhaps adopt it into other aspects of your painting workflow to merge texture and decals.



Use the sliders to bring the underlying image into view.

Question

My zero-gravity action scenes lack punch. Can you help?

Juan Martinez Mangelle, US



Adding some elements on the upper image strengthens the sensation of zero gravity, and also helps to fill the composition.



Answer

Paco replies



Painting an action scene in zero gravity is no different to painting any other action scene. You still have to think about a striking composition, deal with anatomy, perspective and so on. The main

difference is that the characters are floating. That's not really something that modifies the process of painting a scene itself, but it gives you a chance to make your image more interesting.

Gravity – or rather, the lack of it – becomes an extra element that you can use. Floating objects, wayward hair, upside-down characters... all these things are compositional possibilities that you usually don't have. Using them not only gives you more creative possibilities, but also strengthens the sensation of zero gravity in the eyes of the viewer. So exploit those elements and force them into your image whenever possible.

Furthermore, a character's movements and reactions are different in zero gravity. For example, in zero gravity it's possible to send a character flying across the room with a single punch, so don't forget to take account of this in your art.



Photoshop's Gaussian Blur filter can be used to enhance the sensation of depth. Use it on objects that are floating in the foreground.

Question

How can I depict a building site without any engineering knowledge?

Nathan Dubois, France



In this concept the structure is so big that it's become part of the natural environment.

Answer

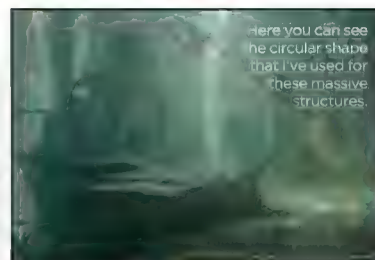
Francesco replies



I think the hardest part of being a real-world engineer are the maths and physics elements, especially on massive

constructions such as bridges, buildings or cities. Luckily, as a concept artist I don't need to work out numerous calculations, but a passing consideration of the process will always feed into your art and make for a more convincing painting.

In general, for large-scale constructions it's good to put down big, simple shapes as a base and then move on to medium and small shapes. In this concept image I use a ring shape as the base. These rings are supported by tower-like structures. Then I break up the curved structures into smaller, square elements. I now use some photo



Here you can see the circular shape that I've used for these massive structures.

textures from a real-life industrial setting to refine the shapes and give them recognisable industrial surfaces.

Contrasting elements help to give a sense of scale to my structures. It could be something that everyone recognises such as a tree, a person, a prop or a creature. Your job is made harder – but not impossible – if you choose to use something that's completely alien to the viewer.

Question

How can I create convincing wear and tear when sketching metal, cloth and skin?

Philip Meeding, Germany

Answer

Mélanie replies



Implying texture is an important step towards giving an object a convincing appearance. However, I

recommend starting your painting by considering the shape of the textured object. A strongly defined base is key here. If it's painted sloppily then the element will look flat and unrealistic, no matter how good the texture is.

Once the shape is finalised, the next step is to understand the texture: how it's created, how it reacts to light, and so on. I'd advise studying from real life – indeed,

photo references are really important at this stage of the painting process.

Then it's on to creating an appropriate wear and tear effect. This step is probably the most simple: you just have to add some flaws in the texture. In the case of metal for example, don't paint something clean and sleek-looking – add some wild brush strokes upon the element just to break the light effect and give your shape an aged appearance. The same thing goes for cloth. It's relatively simple to add some small tears of fabric to enhance the texture effect.

Question Are there shortcuts for speed painting characters and faces?

Ben Morgan, England

Answer Bill replies



The easiest way to approach speed painting is to work in stages using a self-imposed time limit. Start out by

giving yourself plenty of time per painting stage and gradually reel that in to the shortest possible time you can paint in. This kind of painting requires that you roughly know in advance what you want to achieve and how to achieve it. If you try to paint blind you'll spend most of your time erasing mistakes.

I start out in PaintShop Pro by creating a rough silhouette of the head. The adjustments I make at this stage are based on my visualisation of the finished head. Then on a new layer I block in cheekbones, eye sockets and the other bumps you'd expect to find on a head with a large brush. I've already decided where the light will come from.

Now I darken the recesses and pull out the prominent areas using a low opacity, medium-sized custom brush. I also perform light blends with a Smudge brush. I don't bother pushing the refinement further once I have the basic head shape. Instead, I lightly detail the features with a smaller brush. I quickly drop low-opacity layers over the image to build up the detail. When I feel it's almost done I add the colour on a Color layer and then finish off with a low-opacity Dodge brush.

Focusing on certain details will often fool the viewer into believing there's more to a speed painting.

Five stages will probably be enough to see the picture to finish. You could do it in three if you want to achieve a more conceptual look.



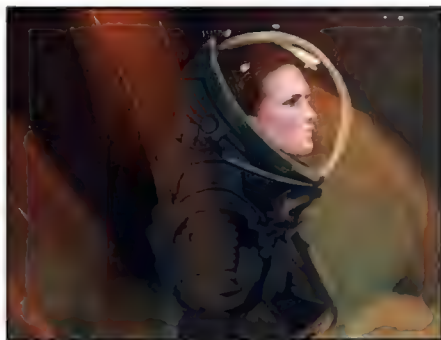
Artist's secret

EXPLORING NEGATIVE SPACE

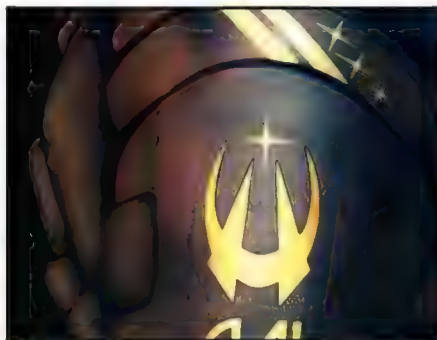


One quick way to check that your silhouette is working is to test the image's negative space. Simply convert the image into a negative, and use the black space to determine your outline integrity. This works better when working from a photo reference, because you can compare the negative space to the photo.

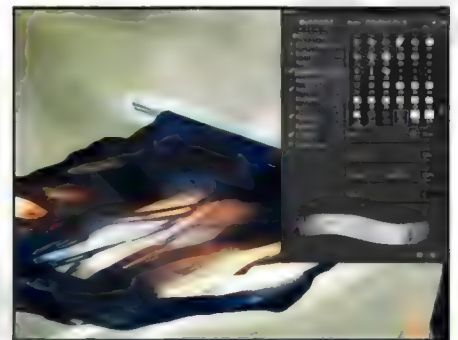
Step-by-step: Paint a weathered space suit



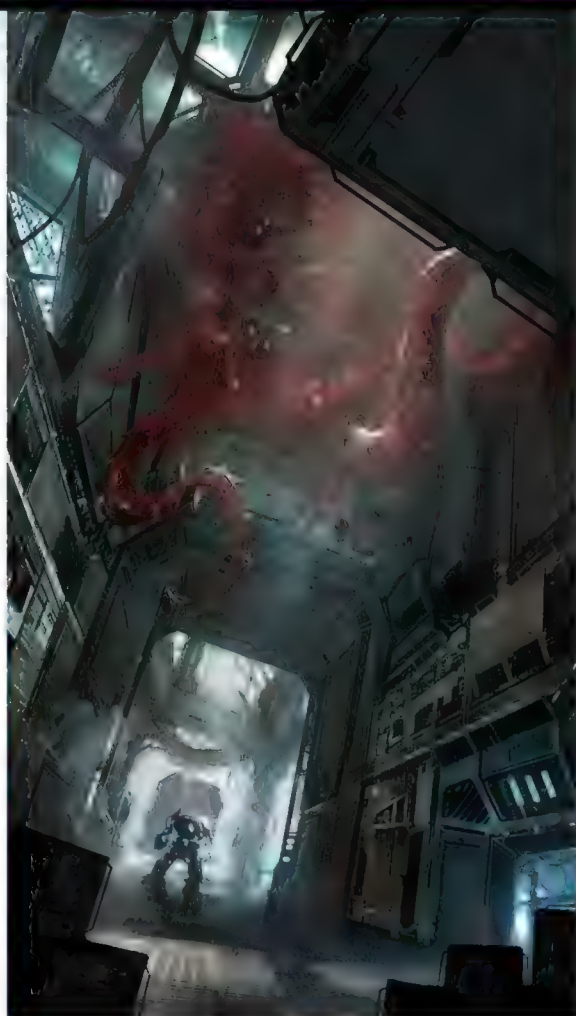
1 I start with the rough shape of the metal space suit. All the elements are here and will be refined later. I use a basic Round edge brush, but you could use a more textured brush. The dual brush setting is sometimes perfect for sketching and creating a texture base quickly.



2 Now I add some wild brush strokes all over the metal element. I break the big light line with scratches, to indicate that this suit has seen a lot of use. I also apply more texture effects ensuring that my strokes add detail, rather than smoothing out the suit's surface.



3 It's the same process for fabric. Here I want to create a floating flag that's badly torn. I quickly sketch the base, emphasising the ripped areas. I add some details such as loose threads using a custom brush set to Dual-brush mode. It can be used for any texture-based sketch.



Question

How can I mix horror and sci-fi elements?

Sunil Kandathil, India

Answer

Francesco replies



Start by considering what will make the scene look inherently sci-fi, and how can it then be pushed into the horror genre?

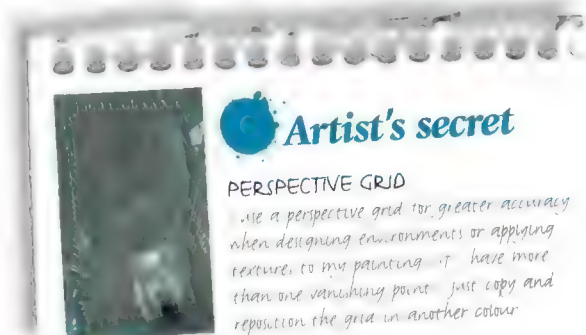
Take the environment and props, such as the interior of a spaceship, building or a futuristic city. I could set the sci-fi scene using interesting designs and futuristic elements, but to then turn it into a horror painting I'd play around with a few core elements such as composition, lighting, colours and storytelling.

To add drama and create a sinister mood I use three-point perspective and tilt the horizon slightly to communicate an unstable point of view. I also apply

dramatic lighting and increase the contrast. I tend to stay away from very saturated colours, because I don't want to create a colourful place. It must have a sense of foreboding, so I prefer to use a desaturated colour scheme.

The storytelling can emphasise the tension. In this case the main character doesn't know what to expect in the next few seconds, but I know that it's going to be a nail-biting moment, so I keep these ideas in mind before starting to paint. I can always emphasise one idea over others, but it's important that I know what to show the viewer so that I can play around with the various elements and have a bit of fun.

To create the horrible, scary creature I take inspiration from many real-life objects such as flowers, plants, weird animals, and a touch of my imagination.



Artist's secret

PERSPECTIVE GRID

I use a perspective grid for greater accuracy when designing environments or applying textures to my painting. I have more than one vanishing point - just copy and reposition the grid in another colour.

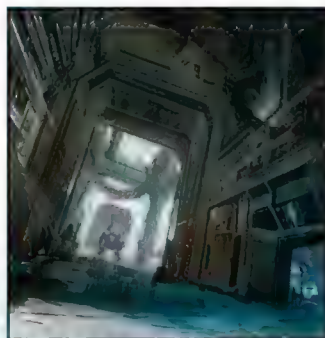
Step-by-step: Craft a futuristic horror scene



1 I start by producing a very fast, rough sketch, in which I play around with composition and storytelling concepts. I avoid introducing too many details and colour choices, instead focusing on just a few key ideas before starting to render. Don't worry about making mistakes at this stage - just let your imagination go through your hand and get something down on the canvas.



2 After the sketching stage I collect some photo references and textures that can accentuate the mood, colours and design I'm going for. I use a green-grey palette for the environment, and a red hue for the disgusting horror creature. Using complementary colours adds more contrast to the painting. Then I choose a photo texture and I paint over it.



3 For the next stage I integrate my chosen photo textures of industrial panels and futuristic, sci-fi patterns into my environment, and then fit them correctly using a handy perspective grid. I also check the values I've chosen and start to add detail to the background. Usually I paint on top of each texture and simply let the details come through.



4 Now I start to flesh out the horrifying creature that's about to give our hero a nasty surprise, using photo textures from both a flower and the internal organs of dead animals. This results in an organic, weird design with a little gory touch that strengthens the horror theme. Finally, I increase the contrast and the saturation of the bloody creature.

Question

What's the best way to avoid sci-fi clichés when painting alien armour?

Rowan Thomas, Wales



I wanted to give the fleet commander of a war-like alien race some military armour, but instead of a bulky protective suit I wanted something more sleek, to show his rank.

Question

I want to quickly produce a sci-fi comic – do you have any tips?

Bethany Osborne, Enliland

Answer

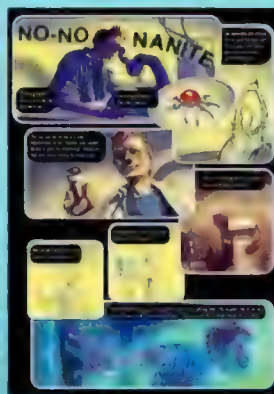
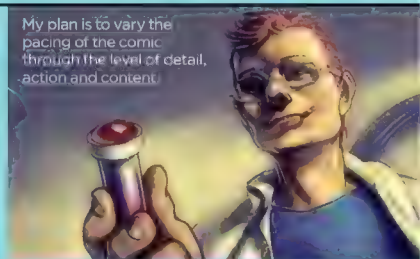
Nick replies



If you aren't a naturally speedy image-maker, this might be a question that has crossed your mind too. The prerequisite conveyor belt of consistent artwork is at odds with my natural pace. Yet narrative content has always been important to me and both comic strip/graphic novel and animation offer fantastic potential in that area.

Unless your comic is to be a labour of love that may never pay you back financially for the time and effort it would take, compromises must be made. Style must be pared down or streamlined – for me that means either going sketchier or for cleaner line and wash. I plump for the latter, but because neither my line-work nor painting is particularly beautiful, I move the viewpoint round in each panel to hold interest instead.

My plan is to vary the pacing of the comic through the level of detail, action and content.



Try to have your chosen style reflect the nature of the tale. I chose a more clinical line and wash style to fit in the sci-fi lab setting.

Answer

Mark replies

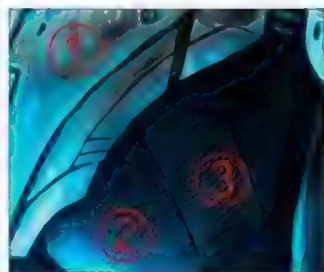


It's tricky to paint eye-catching, futuristic armour that also looks believable in its own universe. I've found that it helps to think through the story of an armour and adds different surface qualities to various parts, rather than use a shiny, just-came-out-from-the-factory chrome material for every surface.

Even really precious objects have some minor scratches, stains or fingerprints on them. We have to handle futuristic things in the same way. Boba Fett's armour from the Star Wars films may be the best example: it looks futuristic, but we can instantly see that it's been through plenty of battles. The best approach is to first focus on the general form and language of the armour, and then add wear and tear to the surfaces.

In this case I had already worked on this universe for quite some time, so I had to follow the established

visual aesthetic, but also create something unique and new. That's why I chose to depict armour that was more ceremonial than practical. After all, why would a fleet commander need a huge suit of armour? I imagine that he has to wear this every day, so I add stains, dust and scratches to the edges and other parts to suggest that the suit is made from a hi-tech material and has been in use for years.



Using various materials in your illustration not only helps to give more details to a piece, but could also make it more believable and realistic in its own universe.

Question

How can I show my character's face without adding more light?

Chet Philips, US

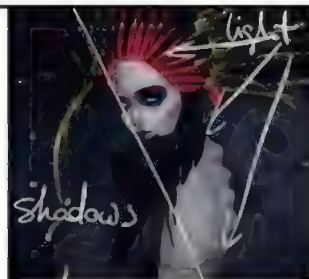
Answer

Mélanie replies

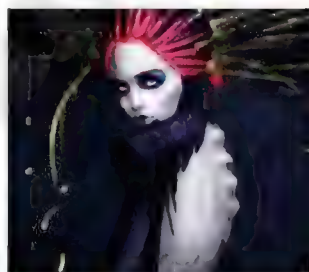


A composition featuring no direct lighting can be hard to work with, but persevere and you'll introduce a mysterious look to the image. First, ensure that the shape of your character is well defined and not too dark, because we don't want it to be lost in the background. For this you can use the ambient light, then add a small glow behind your character or a few details depending on the type of scene you're painting.

Another trick is to push the details. The more detailed the scene, the more it'll stand out even if the face isn't the focal point. So spend time working up the costume, hair and so on. Finally, if there's just one light source then make it a strong one. Don't keep too much of your character's face in the shadows. Instead, use this strong light to add some subtle facial information.



The light will come from the right and so the face, which is the focal point of the image, will have to stand out. I increase the light to achieve the desired effect.



Here I increase the strength of the primary light. Because it's the only light source I want it to be really strong. The viewer needs to see the character's back clearly.

Question

What do I need to bear in mind when painting an underwater composition?

Fraige Burnhops, ArtRage



In real life our eyes can't focus underwater properly, but I'm keen to keep the focal points clean and sharp, so I try to emulate how underwater cameras work.

Answer

Mark replies



Water is a much denser element than air and filters out the light – the deeper we go, the darker it gets. That's why we have to change the rules of atmospheric perspective in this case. Our horizon line will be the darkest part of our imagined skyline, and things become lighter and more saturated the closer we move to the water's surface.

Distant objects will look blurry because the constantly moving water spreads the light in every direction. This helps to create more depth and reduced background detail. I give the light sources extra glow because of the same reason.

I'd recommend not basing your colour palette on a simple blue, but to make use of a range of blues and greens. Life depends on the amount of phytoplanktons in the oceans, because these creatures form the base of the foodchain. This affects the colour of the water: the more plankton that's present, the greener the water.

As a finishing touch I add shoals of fishes swimming around and air bubbles above the habitats to indicate life and movement.

Instead of painting the typical factory-like underwater base of the evil genius, I want to show a beautiful, slightly alien-looking scene.



Artist's secret



EXTRA UNDERWATER DEPTH

You can add extra depth to your image by adding a dark foreground element. The blurred edge suggests that it's out of focus and closer to the viewer.

Question

Can you help me move away from black backgrounds?

Amanda Spinks, UIS



You'll be surprised at just how easy it is to finish a painting without using black. You would rarely see anything close to black in full sunlight!

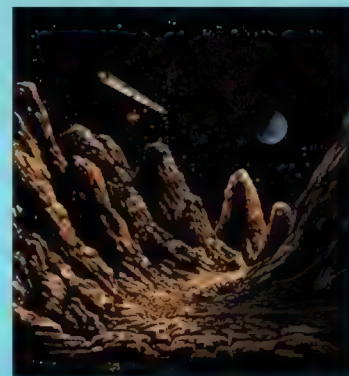
Answer

Bill replies



It's not just backgrounds that you should be thinking about, but the painting as a whole. The overuse of black can take the edge off a painting as well as flatten the image. That's not to say that black doesn't have its place, but as a general rule try to avoid it – push it down the order in your palette. Try to make either dark hues or use black to darken hues, like a Multiply layer. No matter how dark the painting, there should always be a subtle hint of object colour. This is also true of white: there are few instances where pure white should be used. Try to think in terms of the darkest hue and the lightest hue, rather than the brightest light and darkest shadow.

You won't find a single spot of black in this ArtRage painting (above). I avoid using black and darken my shadows with either a dark purple for cooler regions or an earthy brown for warmer ones. The light is only partially obscured where a shadow is cast, so think about low-level ambient and reflected light, too.



Black has its place, especially in space! But when you consider a planet's atmosphere and other such phenomena there's still plenty of opportunity for colour.

Question

How can I give my sci-fi image the feel of an Old Master?

Michael Jackson, US

Answer

Nick replies



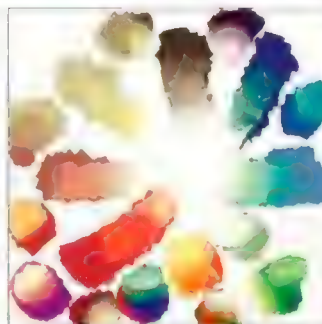
There's a common stereotype associated with Old Masters, which usually comes across in the form of crusty, discoloured oil paintings with religious themes. Early school trips to museums and art galleries are to blame for that. Most of the popular pigments ground for paint at the time were earth- or clay-based colours. Brighter pigments often came at prohibitive prices and could be extremely toxic. The effect of aging and oxidising of the painting itself and its coats of varnish often disguise the original sparkle that many an image may have held. I was lucky enough to see the Sistine chapel ceiling in mid-restoration and the difference between the before and after areas was startling. Bottom line: the Old Masters stereotype equates to a brown-biased palette for me, but look into it properly yourself.

Other main factors for identifying this imagery period include the use of chiaroscuro (exaggerated light/dark) and exaggerated posture twist (contraposta). Again, look these terms up for fuller explanations, because there's not really room here.

I'm going along the starting path of one technique that lays down a red mid-ground base colour into which I block in an underpainting with lighter and darker tones. In real oils you would then glaze colours over and build up form and depth. However, in this digital world I find it needs a little adapting...



ArtRage offers a nice Oil brush that can deliver the look of paint with depth if desired. It's best used with one of the canvas textures.



In the same way that you might lay out your paints on a real palette, I prepare this selection of colour splurges to use as my digital palette.

Artist's secret

CUT DOWN ON YOUR COLOURS

Using a limited colour palette can make life much easier when using colour. I used six base colours and white for this image. I know that is a specific exercise, but you'll find that a limited palette can really help unify an image.

Step-by-step: Give your art a classical look

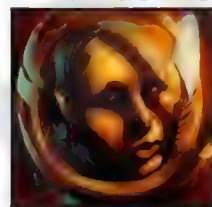
1 In ArtRage I set a basic canvas texture and bump up the scale and texture a bit. I mark out a rough idea on the red base using the pencil and block in some light areas using warm-white (with just a touch of ochre) and to start defining some form with the Oil Thinner setting turned up to about 65 per cent. The main light source is coming from the right.



2 I sample colours from the prepared image of my mixer palette that I've pinned up on screen as a reference image, and establish what are likely to be the darkest areas to the left of her face. I find the best way to get this depth is to glaze my darkest brown/purple mix over the base painting on a layer set to Multiply, with the Oil Thinners still turned up.



3 I work at building form using colour that's strongly biased to a warm ochre palette. Shadows are kept exaggeratedly dark (for the chiaroscuro effect). Any glazing layers that I add are



collapsed as soon as I finish with them, enabling me to work as much as possible on one layer with the Oil brush. Finally, I add the highlights to the scene.

Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.



Legends of the CRAFT

Blizzard Entertainment is finally ready to raise the curtain on its very own labour of love. We take an exclusive look at the company's Fine Art Project

Three years in the making, Blizzard's Fine Art Project features the art of nine of the world's greatest living fantasy artists, offering their visions of World of Warcraft, Diablo and StarCraft. It is an extraordinary 'personal project'.

Chris Metzen, Blizzard's senior art, story and brand development veteran, is candid about the motive behind the venture. "The impetus of the project was emotional. It's a celebratory exercise. We haven't even talked about a business plan."

That may sound naïve when considering the games behemoth's two decade history of success. But then there's the artists: Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell, Alex Ross, Michael Whelan, Simon Bisley, Paul Bonner, Alex Horley, Todd Lockwood, Craig Mullins, Syd Mead. A dream team commissioned to create original art on canvas in oils and acrylics, to hang on the walls of the Blizzard's Irvine, California headquarters, to 'energise' and inspire the artists. This is a

spectacular homage to Blizzard's art heroes, and you can see how the business side of things was overlooked.

The project's roots date back to 2001, when the late Keith Parkinson created The Final Stand for Diablo 2. "Keith was a rock star to us," says Chris, "and maybe in a sick way it made us feel really cool to be a part of that kind of tradition." Around that time, work on Aspect of the Wild trading card game brought in hundreds of new artists to Blizzard's attention. The notoriously clamped-down Blizzard aesthetic was getting a shot in the arm, and it felt good.

Drawing up a wish list two years ago wasn't hard. Frank Frazetta was contacted but was too ill to contribute, but everyone else contacted said yes. Artists were given



CHRIS METZEN
During his 19 years at Blizzard, Chris has helped to shape the worlds of StarCraft, World of Warcraft and Diablo. He's also been a art director, voice actor, and recently helped create the comic Transformers: Autocracy.

scenes that either played to their strengths or offered them something new. "In one way it was throwing the Hail Mary pass and hoping that these guys were interested," Chris says. "We're a bunch of geeky video guys, so when you talk about this line-up, there's a 'we're not worthy' psychology that comes into play."

But that's not the whole story. Blizzard is renowned for its aesthetic consistency, of keeping its sprawling worlds tied together visually. "There's no other word than the dirty, naked word 'control'. The overarching vision of a thing is definitely in play," he admits. "But that's not from a need to control as artists."

This tension between ticking aesthetic boxes and searching for original vision makes these paintings all the more fascinating. And, until Blizzard figure out a 'business plan', and a way to share this art with the public, the following gallery and artist interviews will have to do. ImagineFX is proud to present legends of the craft. ■

"When you talk about this line up, there's a 'we're not worthy' psychology that comes into play"

Alex Horley



Alessandro Orlandelli, AKA Alex Horley, is no stranger to depicting Blizzard's World of Warcraft characters – the Italian artist did four paintings for the first World of Warcraft trading card game back in 2005. "I still remember how excited I was when they asked me to start working on it," he says.

Having mainly contributed to WoW, it was a welcome change for Alex to be asked to paint key characters from

Diablo. "I was asked to visualise the final showdown between Diablo and Imperius, a classic good vs evil," he says. "This was my first opportunity to create something for Diablo and they wanted me to go big. I decided to do it on a 30x40-inch board: it's the biggest painting I've ever done." The result is suitably monumental and bombastic – a homage to the main characteristics of all Blizzard art.

Alex was welcomed into the Blizzard family long ago, and so was familiar with the US company's requirements from the start. "I submitted several concept sketches to

Artist Insight


THE CLASSICAL

"I wanted a classical feel to the composition – Satan facing St. Michael, Blizzard style. I could have gone more cinematic, but I wanted to suggest something close to a Renaissance painting dealing with similar themes, yet with modern characters."

get a clear understanding of what direction I should move forward with. In one sketch the character's silhouettes were more separated, while in the chosen sketch they overlapped a bit, which worked much better and was more dynamic. After Blizzard approved the sketch, I did a colour comp to fine-tune the details and establish the basic palette.

"Once this was approved I approached the final painting. I broke it down in acrylics first and then finished it with oil. I completed the painting in less than two weeks."

www.alexhorleyart.com



"I worked with Blizzard on the design idea to match a specific mood piece for the character"

Artist Insight

GET INVOLVED

"I photographed myself doing the basic pose to see if I could place my hand exactly where I had directed in my initial sketch layout, and found that I needed some rough alteration because the pose had some more natural challenges that I wasn't imagining."



Alex Ross



Revered comic artist Alex Ross painted StarCraft character Jim Raynor in this piece entitled Justice. It wasn't

just the dynamic composition that needed work, explains the artist, but also a more elusive element. "I worked with Blizzard on the design idea to match a specific mood piece for the character," he tells us.

Alex used photographs of himself to get the specifics of the pose nailed down. "Much of the challenge was to measure up to the graphics done for video game development nowadays, which are much more detailed than I often have to be," he says of his usual comic art workload.

"Once the reference was in hand, I copied my tight pencil rough to the larger board size, making adjustments for what information the photos were giving me," he continues. Working with gouache paint on Strathmore Bristol paper, with some minor airbrush added in, Alex soon found a familiar rhythm with the piece. "I worked up mostly the darks first, then



lightest colour last, with acrylic airbrush colours often sprayed in for various hazy effects and smoother surfaces where needed."

The reaction at Blizzard was positive, to say the least. "The fact that we got to engage with a guy like Alex, it makes me feel connected to this much larger tradition," says Chris Metzen.

www.alexrossart.com

Artist Insight

KEEPING A LID ON IT

"My instinct is usually to tone things down to a more naturalistic feel, but this needed something more in your face! For this image I buried my inclinations and let the Warcraft world take over. I can't say this was easy, but it was an interesting challenge to try and portray someone else's universe."

Paul Bonner



Even the top artists have to deal with unforeseen challenges. Such was the case for Paul Bonner's work on Goblin Ambush,

which was actually painted twice!

Four possible scenarios were mooted. Paul went for the one that he felt he had the most room to inject the most of himself. "I love painting nature, so I chose the brief that allowed me to do just this," he recalls. A sketch was approved, but the painting that Paul then worked up didn't get the approval of all concerned and some dramatic changes were requested.

Here the nature of traditional project became painfully apparent. "It was much bigger than I usually work and I could see that the changes required would require repainting the whole thing," he says. "If I worked digitally, this may have more possible."

Luckily, Paul was given a looser brief by letting him choose the background. "I was able to free up my imagination to create a scenario that I felt I had a bit more of a stake in," says Paul.

www.paulbonner.net

Boris Vallejo & Julie Bell



Partners in crime Boris and Julie were thrilled at the prospect of collaborating with a client with renowned passions for their creations.



"People have spent years developing these worlds and characters, and have strong personal

attachments to every detail, which is why we were honoured to be chosen to portray the well-loved Diablo."

The couple were first approached over a year ago to create a unique piece based on the Diablo universe, and were keen to ensure that both visions shared the same principals. "We really wanted the painting to be 'in' the world that Blizzard has created," says Julie. "The overall look of the painting was mostly influenced by the reference pictures that art director Jeremy Cranford sent us." Boris adds that,

"Once the painting process starts, it doesn't matter who does what"

"This made our job both easier and more exact. The angles and colour schemes were up to us."

Working together on their own creations, a major challenge for the duo was finding the right balance between artistic creativity and accuracy. Julie compares the process to the relationship between actor and screenwriter. "It's about getting the best performance out of everybody involved: while still working through the filter of your own style, you let go of your ego and yourself as the creator. This allows you to engage fully in the world of the character you're painting without a struggle."

So how do two people create one shared project? "It's very harmonious," Julie says. "Once the painting process starts, it doesn't matter who does what. One just starts, then, after a while, the other picks up where the painting was left, going back and forth like that." Working with oils on a canvas board around 20x28 inches, the composition was to place Diablo as the main focus while showcasing many other iconic characters. "The size of the board meant that we could have lots of characters in the painting, but still have a strong focus on the detailed body structure of Diablo."

www.imaginistix.com



Artist Insight

THE LETTING GO

"Letting go is so important. Try to start without expectation. If you start out thinking it has to look perfect, you'll only tense yourself up and make the art stiff and lifeless. So don't think about it – just move forward, then pretty it up as you go."







"I think Blizzard chose me to recreate this scenario for one reason: story. Narrative is what I love best, and this was a lot of fun"

Todd Lockwood



When Todd was first approached about the Fine Art Project, he wasn't the biggest fan of the medium. "The media

that I used to use without trouble now gave me headaches and a sore throat. At the time, I was trying to find new media that I could use without harming myself."

"There were a number of setbacks, but Blizzard was patient," he recalls. "With my medical issues, I had to learn new ways of painting, avoiding materials containing petroleum distillates. I tried clear gesso on Larry Elmore's recommendation, which gives the surface of the board a sandpaper-like finish that grabs the paint. I then painted with only linseed oil. It was nice to have a real brush in my hand again."

With Todd in mind, Blizzard wanted to depict the opening of the Black Gate into the human world, an early moment in the Warcraft mythos. Todd's vision had to be in line with the game's history, which wasn't always easy. "Blizzard has historians who are the Keepers of the Canon! By the end, many characters had to be redrawn to correct historical inaccuracies. For example, originally the ogre on the far right had two heads, but it was decided that this character couldn't have been at this place and time. So he became a one-headed ogre instead."

Nevertheless, the process was still extremely satisfying for Todd. "I think Blizzard chose me to recreate this scenario for one reason: story. There are a number of vignettes of action combined into a whole, with lots of sweeping lines and diagonals and dramatic light. Narrative is what I love best, and this was a lot of fun."

www.toddlockwood.com

Artist Insight

BATTLE PLANS

"With a complex narrative, I start with lines of action, and then imagine what they represent. The central girl is the eye of the storm — every line moves away and back to her. Action is organised by a strong diagonal from lower right to upper left."



Syd Mead



Syd Mead has produced designs for aeroplanes, command ships and sci-fi props, and although he's never

worked for Blizzard before, this area was hardly new to him. "I've been working on electronic game projects since programs were coded in four bits," he reminds us.

Things have moved on a bit from then, and with thousands of pieces of art, not to mention the StarCraft games themselves, Syd had plenty of reference material to delve into. "I received 3D views of the various characters plus an idea of how the game was set up in terms of scenario and the physical ancillary props," he says. "I went to work creating my interpretation of the game attributes, while the various versions of the main bad guy, the Ultralisk, were sent via e-mail, and were quite different."

Certainly, the tension of artistic freedom and specific features that needed to be adhered to were at play here. "I created an average of the

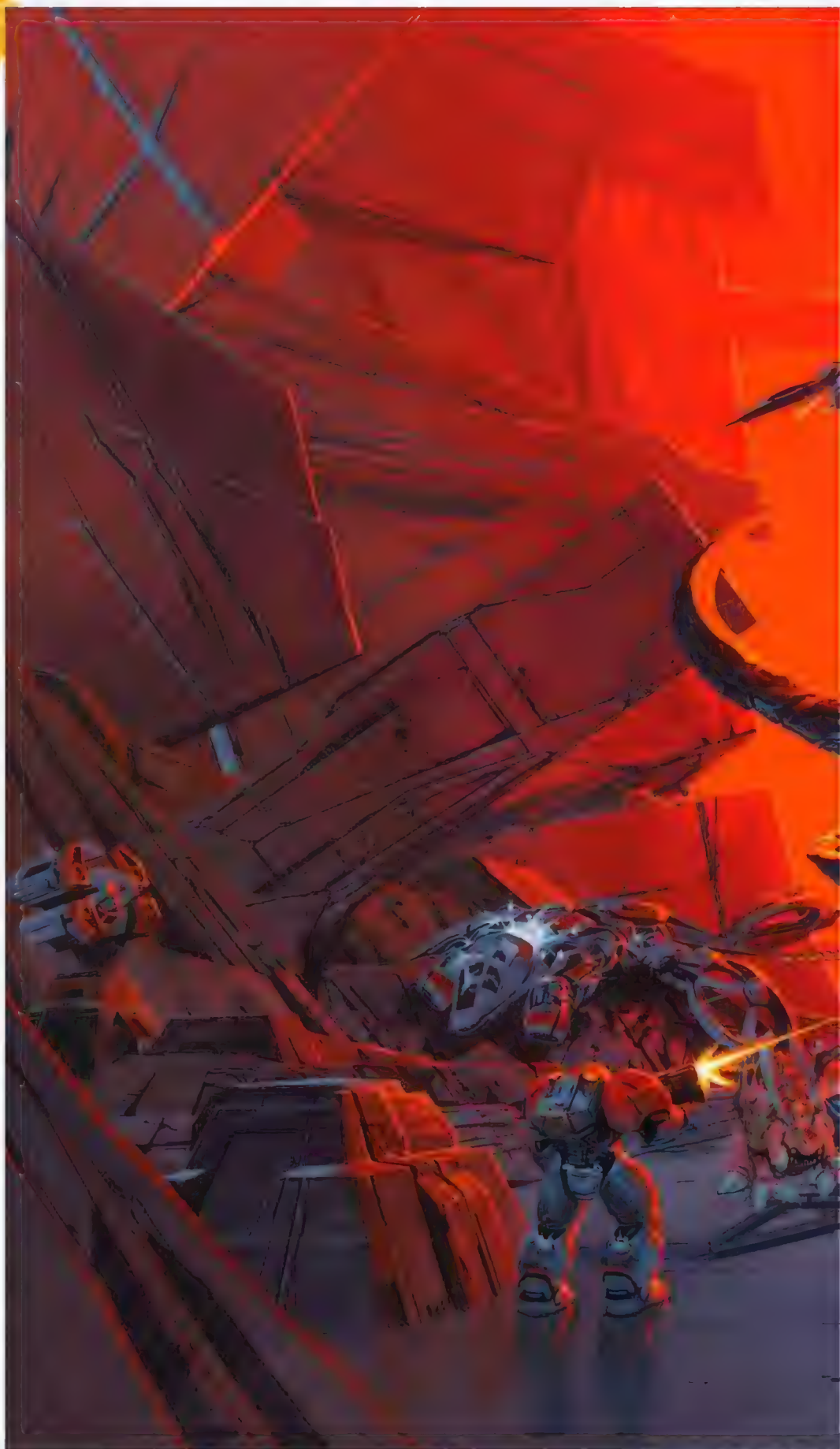
"I painted firing trails from the marines' guns to the target - and was then instructed to remove them"

different versions of the Ultralisk and upon submission was instructed to redo the monster's face to match the most recent image sent to me," says Syd. And that wasn't all he had to alter. "I painted firing trails from the marines' guns to the target and was instructed to remove them. I was thinking laser-esque effects, but that concept apparently wasn't approved and I had to repaint several of the characters."

Having moved from thumbnails to a grey value sketch and then a colour miniature, Syd worked in gouache. "The colour miniature establishes the colouration of the finished piece and also serves to get approval of the client in terms of picture content and relative accuracy of what the picture will show," says the artist.

Syd's warm coloured and dramatic painting emphasises the scale of the Ultralisk by choosing a low viewpoint looking up. "I placed the scenario in a sort of canyon, which was a split in the surface of an errant asteroid or planetoid," he explains.

www.sydmead.com



Artist Insight

FIRE IT UP

"My colour palette was hot. I wanted to suggest excitement, danger, impending disaster. The palette in terms of pigment colours was red, orange, magenta with the tempering effects of black, indigo, purple and several blues for the contrasting light streaks in the 'rocks' indicating habitation."





Simon Bisley



The decision to give Simon Bisley Diablo's Goatman to depict was a happy coincidence for the artist. "I'd just come back from Israel, not long before I did this piece," he says. "I was out with the Bedouin just outside of Jerusalem, and we got some great images of goats. Scabby-looking things but tremendous looking, really intense, with a real intelligence about them."

Perhaps more comfortable drawing the human form, Simon wanted to create an image that made sense in his mind. "Blizzard has got very high standards and I had to do a Goatman. And that wasn't easy. That's a guy with a goat head, but he's got to look cool," insists the artist.

Eagerly offering several action sketches, Blizzard came back to him with its request of a straight-on, full-

body portrait. "I suppose it's like that painting of Death Dealer, of him on a horse, static. Or the first Frazetta Conan standing there with a woman at his feet, straight on, and that's a powerful image," says Simon.

The resulting Goatman resembles a demonic devotional panel, with its red desert rock background and its flat perspective. Used to the artistic explosion of working in comics, this simple composition helped Simon retain momentum on a longer job. "When you work in comics you tend to explode and get it done," he explains, "whereas this was a process of doing a drawing and then doing another drawing until everyone's happy. So you're losing some of the momentum, the original line. I was worried about that, but because it's a static piece there was nothing lost."

www.simonbisleyart.com

Artist Insight

NEED FOR SPEED

"The thing is to draw it very quickly, getting the power down and keeping it. Don't overdraw it or try and make it too realistic. You've got to have some stylisation in there."



Craig Mullins



Having worked on some trading cards for Blizzard before, Craig was easily contacted to contribute to the Blizzard fine art project, but working with friends can provide its own problems. "Blizzard was very generous and patient and gave me no real deadline," recalls Craig, "which proved a problem for



I would have loved to push the waves more in a William M Turner style, painting air and water spray and light. But I didn't have the confidence to do that.

me. So much other work was coming up all the time that had very short and hard deadlines that I kept on putting it off and losing momentum."

Fittingly for one of the pre-eminent digital artists of his generation, pixels played a part in the early stage for Craig. "I did a tight digital comp for planning and approval, which is pretty standard for me," he says, but the format wasn't the real challenge for Craig. Other than the cards that he had worked on, Craig and Blizzard's paths hadn't really crossed over the years, for fairly elemental reasons. "Maybe the high fantasy style and the way I work

are too different. I don't generally use the extreme value and colour push that's part of that style," he says.

The real challenge came when depicting the specifics of the scene. The brief not only focused on narrative in Raising the Tomb of Sargeras, it was also specific down to the nuts and bolts of the piece. "It was a challenge, given that the proportions of the in game characters were wide and squat, and the boat has rivets that are three feet across," says Craig. "How much can you shrink them to make them more realistic, and still look like a huge hulking orc boat?"

Putting the action in the background, Craig brought in another character all of his own into the piece: the monstrous, solid waves. Ironically, Craig wasn't fully confident with this bold feature of the painting. "I would have loved to push the waves more in a William M Turner style, painting air and water spray and light. But I really didn't have the confidence to do that," he admits. "In the end I wish I had lost some more edges to the waves, but you gain designed shapes if you keep the contrast in. I wasn't really after naturalistic waves."

www.goodbrush.com

Artist Insight

SURF'S UP

"Waves and water are tricky to paint, with so many variables. It's best to simplify the light/dark shapes and distort them so they describe the forms of the waves. Make choices of what aspects of waves to include. Avoid smearing the whole thing together and hiding behind that."





Michael Whelan



This was the first time that Michael had worked for Blizzard, having met with the project's commissioning editor

whilst attending IlluxCon in 2010. Moving to his larger art studio due to the sheer size of the Deathwing canvas, the artist used an easel instead of his usual drawing board, and stuck to acrylics instead of oils.

"I kept a laptop to one side, running a slide show of my concept sketches and some reference photos of clouds and such," he says. "My contact at Blizzard emailed numerous concept renderings of the dragon, done by people on the Blizzard payroll. They were pretty damn good; I recall asking him why they were paying me to do a painting their own guys could do."

After fixing on a thumbnail to take on, and working up colour schemes, Michael drew in the large shapes on the canvas with pastel pencils, working over them with acrylics.

I recall asking Blizzard why it was paying me to do a painting its own guys could do"

"Since I usually work from background to foreground, I started by painting sketches of oceanic steam explosions, explosive clouds arising out of a vortex of water," says Michael. "Some of them resembled mushroom clouds – a deliberate attempt to convey the size and power of Deathwing."

Blizzard wanted the dragon to be ascending out of a maelstrom, exploding into the air in rage. "My reaction was, 'Cool. Yeah, I can do that,'" he says. After digging into the mechanics of the scene, however, Michael saw it was a lot harder to visualise than he had first thought. "First of all, how does one get far enough away to see anything when the walls of water making up the maelstrom are in the way? And wouldn't a red-hot metal dragon be sending out such a volume of steam, due to contact with ocean water, that he'd be all but obscured from view?"

"It seemed to take forever, to be honest," he recalls. "The painting was finished in my head weeks before the actual rendering was complete."

www.michaelwhelan.com

Artist insight

TURN UP THE HEAT

"I scanned a monochrome version, printing out several small copies of the value layout. I then painted over these in different colour compositions, mostly to determine colour temperature. The final painting ended up a lot more colourful than the original sketch, because I already had a road map to work from."

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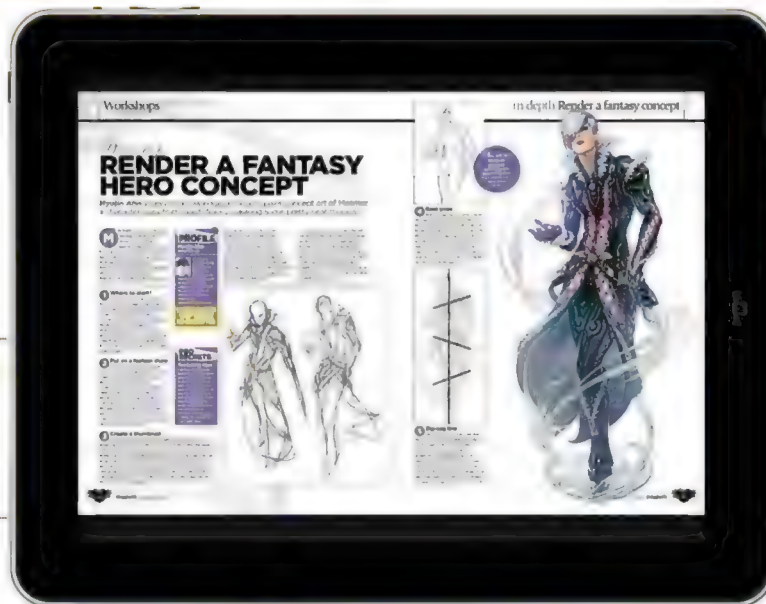
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Issue 84 July 2012



Anna Dittmann paints not one, but two covers for our fairy tale-themed issue: choose between Snow White and the Evil Queen. Inside, we reveal the influence of Arthur Rackham, see what it takes to become a book illustrator, show you how to draw heads with personality, and paint with spontaneity.

Issue 85 August 2012



This manga art special bulges with fantastic art and advice, ranging from Sakimi Chan's colourful cover character to Feng Zhu painting four images at once, and Jack Bosson's priceless advice for drawing costumed figures. We also talk to comics legend Joe Madureira.

Issue 86 September 2012



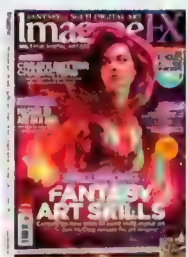
We celebrate the gaudy, over-the-top world of pulp art, and embrace the genre with workshops from Will Murali and Dan D Evans. Weta's Christian Pearce dirties up his art, ex-Disney artist Jack Bosson draws jazz dancers, and Thom Tenery paints a snowy alien landscape.

Issue 87 October 2012



The age-old problem areas of colour and light are tackled head-on this issue, with excellent workshops from Emmanuel Malin, Phroilan Gardner and cover artist Helen Rusovich on the subjects. We also talk to rule-breaking poster boy Simon Goinard and lots, lots more.

Issue 88 November 2012



It's a trip down memory lane this issue as we track down artists behind the Fighting Fantasy gamebooks. Workshops include Francesco Lorenzetti on three-hour speedpainting, Simon Webber on 3D creature concepts and James Gurney on fantasy architecture. We also talk to 2011's Rising Stars.

Issue 89 December 2012



Our game art special includes some of the world's leading video game artists. There's Remko Troost on Assassin's Creed 3, Hoyjin Ahn reveals Guild Wars 2 techniques and John Park discusses HAWKEN. Plus Epic Games's Shane Pierce explores the art of Gears of War and we visit Ubisoft's Montreal studio.

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Justin Barnes

We explore the wonderfully odd stories and characters that fill Justin's sketchbook



PROFILE

Justin Barnes

COUNTRY: US



For Justin, art began as a cathartic release, and has since evolved into an energetic and character-driven signature style. He teaches flash animation at his local college, and hopes to illustrate future novel reprints of the likes of Philip K. Dick and draw odd things for a living.
www.seemonster.deviantart.com

SWORDSMAN

"Concept art for my currently untitled Flash 'choose your own adventure' game, which I'm busy developing."



"Someone needs to make a sequel to Ralph Bakshi's film Wizards"

RE-ANIMATED

"This is a manifestation of my lifelong enjoyment of the Ralph Bakshi movie Wizards, made in the vacuum of a much-needed sequel."



NUMBER 2

"A sketch made in a particularly foul mood. No clear connection to anything!"



FIGHT

"This is a fight to the death for the two main characters in my story Last Days of the Human Race."

THE EMPLOYEE

"Here's my character for a loose story, which is based on the completely messed-up way food is produced."



Sketchbook



TROUBLED YOUTH

"The boy is the personification of wrath: it's his destiny to destroy the city."

"The Mantis character was co-developed with my nephew in an attempt to stave off boredom"

THE INSURANCE MAN

"The booze insurance salesman fights for the small town community he loves when aliens invade, turning his whole world upside down."



ASSASSIN DRONE

"A concept piece for a story, in which a ruthless corporation is creating cyborg drones to do its bidding. It uses the recently dead because it's cheaper than building robots."





NECTAR OF THE GODS

"Just a quick sketch that demonstrates my obsession with the wise old homeless guy archetype."



MANTIS

"Mantis is a product of genetic engineering, and starts a rebellion on the Martian Terraforming campaign. The character was co-developed with my nephew in an attempt to stave off boredom."

ZEUS

"This is an attempt at painting digitally. I created the pose before I thought that it was Zeus that I was painting."

Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com, or upload your sketches at www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook.

BUCCANEERS

A recent painting that Kierron finished last year, this image is for the cover of Pathfinder: Pirates of the Inner Sea. [Close](#)

“I don’t feel I have a particular style, which is bad in that my work isn’t recognisably me, but good in that I can take on different projects”

KIERAN YANNER

From card games to video games, space wars to dragons, Kieran enjoys playing the chameleon art role

*Y*ou're in for a treat when you flick through Kieran Yanner's portfolio. From space platforms among the asteroids to barbarian warriors, to Hindu-inspired multi-headed giants and on to frolicking forest nymphs, there's a bounty of weird and wonderful themes on display.

And his style varies quite a bit, too. In his concept-orientated work you'll detect his quick, sketchy strokes. In contrast, one of his front covers featuring a pair of dragons positively bristles with detail. Teeth, horns, claws, skin colouration and dust and debris are everywhere.

"Honestly, I don't feel I have a particular style," says the Australian artist who has transplanted himself to the US west coast. "It's both bad and good – bad in that my work isn't recognisably me, good in that I can take on a lot of different projects which has given me stable work. I suppose I'm a bit of a chameleon."

Kieran's certainly turned his hand to a broad range of projects for a variety of clients. Working at Microsoft, he contributed to games released for the Kinect platform. Marvel, DC, NCSoft, Fantasy Flight Games, Paizo Publishing, Wizards of the Coast... the list goes on and on. Some of his favourite projects were the WARS Trading Card Game and The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game, both published by Decipher. The former

was a science fiction-based affair and in his work for the series he developed a style that combined painting and photo montage to great effect.

Working on The Lord of the Rings card art, meanwhile, Kieran developed an approach to colour that can be seen throughout much of his subsequent work. "I will say the one question I get asked a lot about is how I approach colour. I like strong raw colour – that came from working on the Lord of the Rings for Decipher and having to pump the colours of movie stills for print. Pushing colour for print has stuck with me since," he says.

TURNING THE LED

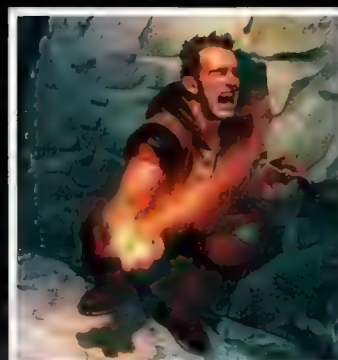
Another highlight for Kieran was his time on the massively multiplayer game Black Star at Spacetime Studios in Austin, Texas. The ambitious project was his first taste of working in video games as a concept artist. He learned about the art pipeline for such creations, some 3D basics and how to adjust his approach to illustration when David Levy, a new lead creative, joined the project halfway through. In the end it was a bitersweet experience as, unfortunately, the game was never released.

Kieran's process and approach changes depending on the project, but his favourite phase is usually developing thumbnails, working out the composition and mood of a piece. If he's working on figurative

Artist PROFILE

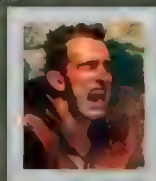
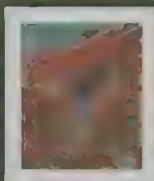
Kieran Yanner

AGE: 31
COUNTRY: US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Whilce Portacio, Jim Lee, Tony Diterlizzi, Gerald Brom, Keith Parkinson and Mattias Snygg
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop
AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE: One week
WEB: www.kieranyanner.com



FIRE SEED A card gaming character brings forth fire in the game Legends of Norrath. [Close](#)

Gallery





BLACKSTAR The game Blackstar was never made, but Kieran Yanner wasn't to blame. He painted this war scene for the concept art in 2007. [Close](#)



NATURE LOVER The Wood Nymph is one of Kieran's most striking recent images, and was created for a cover of Kobold Quarterly. [Close](#)

A TALE OF TWO DRAGONS

A cinematic approach to a magazine cover worked wonders for Keiran...

One of Kieran's exceptional pieces of artwork was created for Kobold Quarterly issue 18, which came out in the summer of 2011. The magazine highlights new fantasy role-playing projects and, rather appropriately, that issue's cover featured two stunningly rendered dragons, in an image full of life and colour and, of course, flaming reptilian muscle.

"That was a challenge, but was an immensely fun undertaking. Kobold Quarterly approached me to do its cover for the summer edition and wanted something that gave the feeling of a summer blockbuster. That gave me a head start in subject matter and choice of palette – I decided on dragons battling in warm and bright colours. I worked up a number of thumbs and this was the one it liked the most," explains Kieran.

He also took a touch of inspiration from one of fantasy art's true masters. "I had been looking at a lot of Frazetta's work around that time as I was also producing covers for Planet Stories – I was pulling a lot of information from how Frazetta would compose a piece and lead the eye through the illustration. I took what I was learning into the dragon piece," the artist concludes.

Comments



Bevon Neale
@magnumFX

"What a powerfully composed painting. It swirls and swishes, throwing you into the centre of this dragon fight. And I love the visual pointers – the wasp-like skin colour and sting of Black, the devilish horn-like ears of Red."



Todd Lockwood
Pro artist

"Excellent life and movement, nice composition, good narrative power. I'm particularly delighted by the markings of the yellow and black dragon. Watch out, Red! You should know that black and yellow critters have nasty stings... Oh, it may already be too late. It's possible that this one ends with two dead dragons. Nice job."



Nick Avallone
Reader

"Kieran's exciting, circular composition keeps my eyes engaged with his beautifully rendered dragons, lingering on their varied scales, novel patterning and unique anatomy. But the gorgeous colours steal the show and make this image sing."



RED VERSUS BLACK
Dragons at war – another front cover for Kobold Quarterly, combining detail and action like a master of D&D artwork. [Close](#)



NORRATH Card art entitled *Sharpened Steel* from last year's game the *Legends of Norrath*. [Close](#)

artwork, he uses models, costumes and photography to develop his ideas. "I'd have the model come in for a shoot and spend some time explaining the concepts," he says. "Typically by then I've rummaged through my costume selection and have lighting set up. I used to be pretty loose with costuming, but have grown to really like that part of the shoot. It feels a little like a scene from a movie unfolding in front of me."

ON HIS PROCESS: BUILDING BACKS

While Kieran gathers shots he likes to see the new ideas unfold as the shoot progresses. Once that's done he creates reference pages for the backgrounds, characters and other elements of the image, gathering appropriate imagery together. When he has thumbnails that work, he fires up Photoshop. "I'll blow up the thumb to the size I've chosen to work at and then either run a Gaussian Blur or another filter to dumb down the forms," he says. "I'm really just looking for a palette and broad shapes to start to work with. The painting will go in passes - most of the time elements are kept at a similar stage, although I may get carried away with an area."

"Sometimes I'll have spontaneous ideas I'd like to use, but they are too early to bring in so I'll work the idea on a layer and turn it off and bring it back when I'm ready to add that part or get that detailed. I prefer not to work from a tight sketch - I know the added benefits but personally it makes the whole process less fun and more tedious. I like surprises, and I like a journey from point A to point D - and if

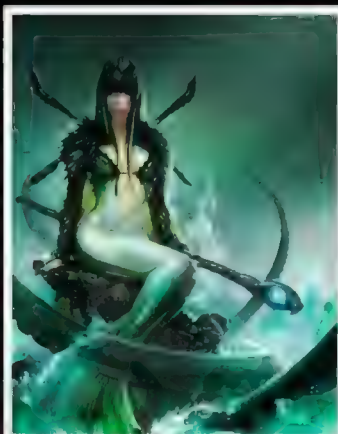
I can skip point B so I can really get the fun out of C, I will."

Today Kieran is based in Seattle, and is turning his experience working for different games franchises - both tabletop and computer - to use as a freelancer. And he's happy to continue playing a chameleon role in the industry. After all, as he points out, it can get pretty boring painting only orcs or just space ships for months on end.

"Being able to take a break and work in a vibrant family-friendly style or an abstract style and then back to something hyper realistic keeps things more exciting for me. Being a chameleon has worked well for me and has enabled me to have a stable career in art - the downside is that people generally won't be able to look at an illustration and go, 'That's a Kieran Yanner piece.' I think I'll focus on developing a style and look that I enjoy doing and call my own, but frankly I'm happy to just be a working artist."

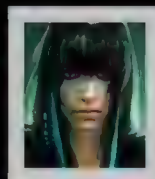
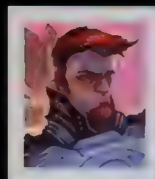
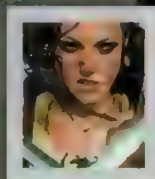
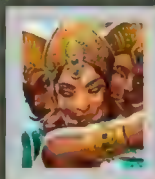
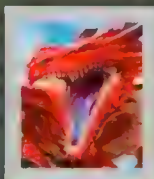


DARK FURY More of Kieran's work is for RPG-related products, including this cover for *Pathfinder's Ebony Destroyers*. [Close](#)



SIREN Back in 2010, Kieran painted this sea-themed cover for *Kobold Quarterly*. [Close](#)

Gallery



Development sheet

Artist PROFILE

Lee Hanho

Country: South Korea



Lee majored in Korean literature at college. After graduation he joined a game-developer company GameHi as a concept designer. He worked on Metal Rage and other projects, including fantasy games. Now he's at Neowiz Games, developing the fantasy MMORPG, Bless. www.hanho.cghub.com

PROJECT TITLE: METAL RAGE

Entrusted by game developer GameHi to develop a big boss mech called Baal, **Lee Hanho** designed a structure to impress. Here he shows us how it developed from a silhouette to a towering final image

ImagineFX

Silhouette

With the silhouette of the mech, I wanted to create a strong and imposing figure. I wanted to make it look like a giant, with a lot of detail and a sense of scale. I wanted to make it look like a boss, with a lot of power and a sense of menace. I wanted to make it look like a machine, with a lot of mechanical detail and a sense of complexity. I wanted to make it look like a creature, with a lot of organic detail and a sense of movement. I wanted to make it look like a boss, with a lot of power and a sense of menace. I wanted to make it look like a machine, with a lot of mechanical detail and a sense of complexity. I wanted to make it look like a creature, with a lot of organic detail and a sense of movement.

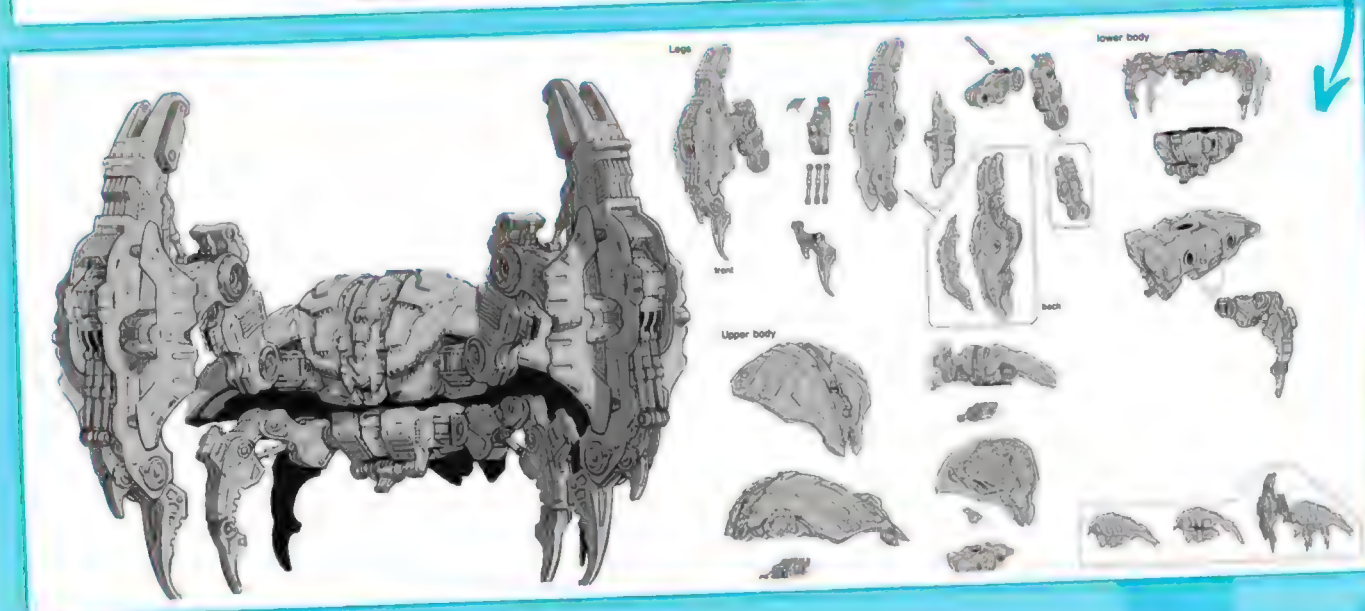
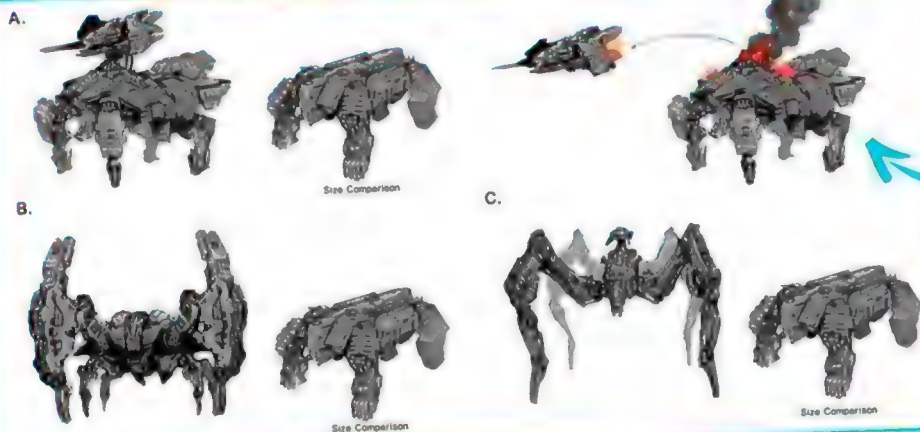


Concept sketch

I wanted to create a strong and imposing figure. I wanted to make it look like a giant, with a lot of detail and a sense of scale. I wanted to make it look like a boss, with a lot of power and a sense of menace. I wanted to make it look like a machine, with a lot of mechanical detail and a sense of complexity. I wanted to make it look like a creature, with a lot of organic detail and a sense of movement. I wanted to make it look like a boss, with a lot of power and a sense of menace. I wanted to make it look like a machine, with a lot of mechanical detail and a sense of complexity. I wanted to make it look like a creature, with a lot of organic detail and a sense of movement.

Detailed sketch and structure

I wanted to create a strong and imposing figure. I wanted to make it look like a giant, with a lot of detail and a sense of scale. I wanted to make it look like a boss, with a lot of power and a sense of menace. I wanted to make it look like a machine, with a lot of mechanical detail and a sense of complexity. I wanted to make it look like a creature, with a lot of organic detail and a sense of movement. I wanted to make it look like a boss, with a lot of power and a sense of menace. I wanted to make it look like a machine, with a lot of mechanical detail and a sense of complexity. I wanted to make it look like a creature, with a lot of organic detail and a sense of movement.

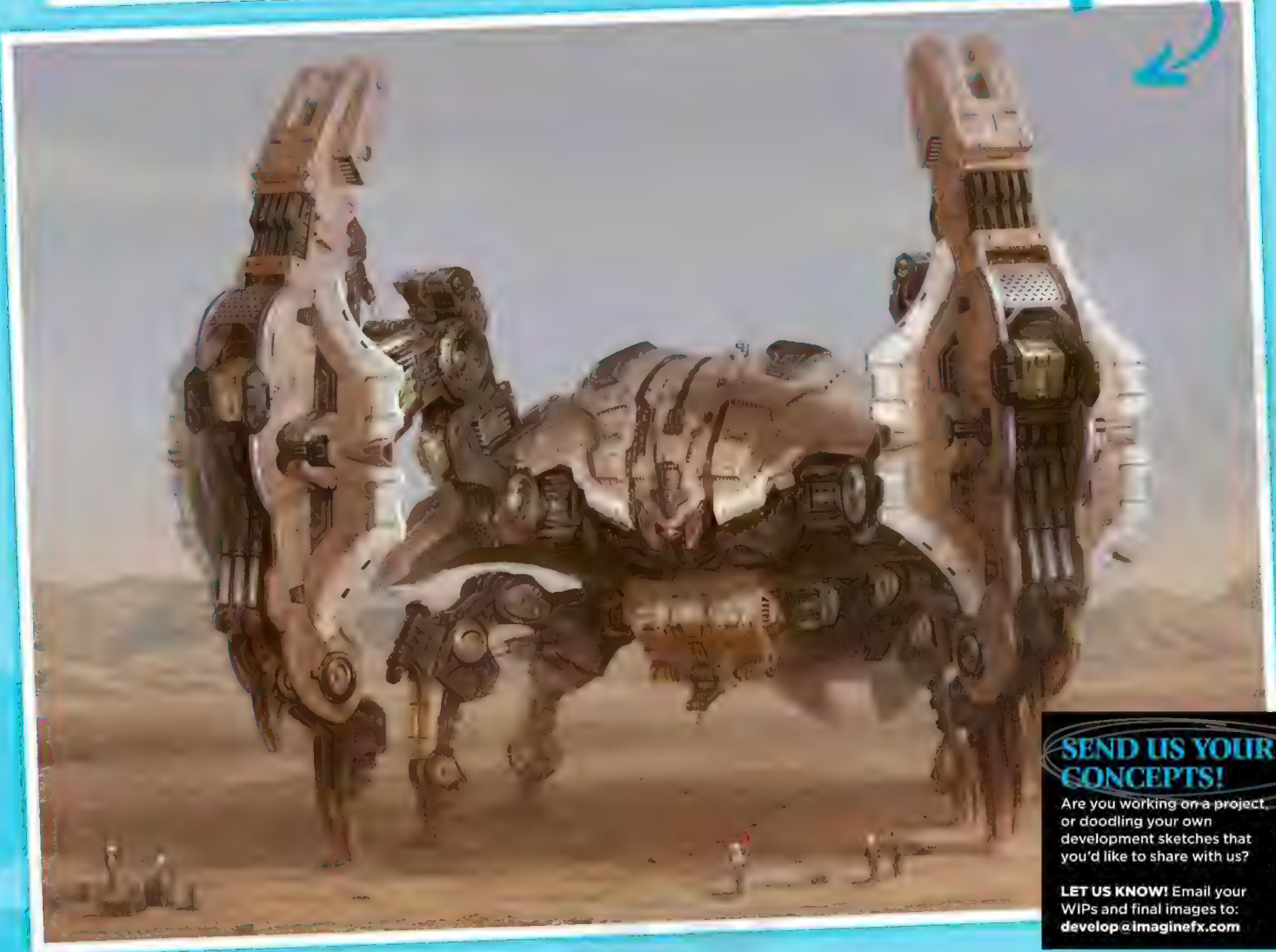


Color palette

Color palette

Artwork

Artwork



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Advice from the world's best artists



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Sam Didier depicts a fight
scene with characters from
StarCraft and Warcraft.

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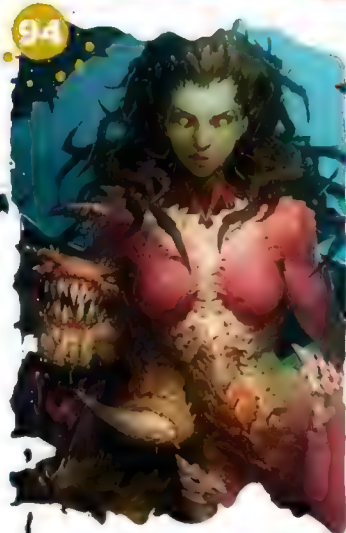
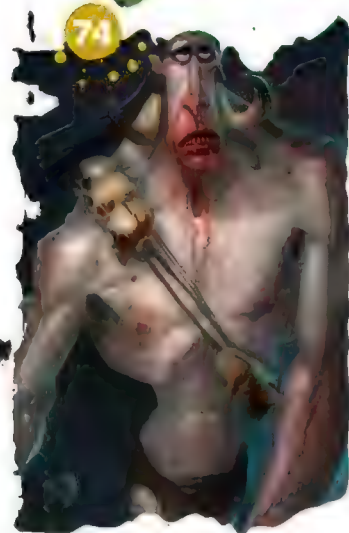
Annie Stegg uses layers to
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Workshop

PICTURE A PAIR OF FIGHTING HEROES

The worlds of Warcraft and StarCraft collide as **Sam Didier** depicts a fight scene with two key characters from the best-selling video games

Hail fellow artisans! My name is Sam Didier, senior art director at Blizzard Entertainment and I'm going to take you on a layer-by-layer journey through a brand new concept piece that I'm doing for our newest game, Blizzard All-Stars. This game merges all

the Blizzard franchises – Warcraft, StarCraft and Diablo – into one game of glorious battle.

I'm really excited about this piece because it will centre around two of my favourite characters. I'm talking about the mean and green sword-slinging Blademaster, Samuro from the Warcraft

franchise. And he'll be fighting back to back with the mysterious, void-wandering Dark Templar, Zeratul, who's from the StarCraft universe.

That is crazy! StarCraft and Warcraft in one picture? Hell yeah. And you, my fellow artist, will make this crazy journey with me. Let's roll!

Artist PROFILE

Sam Didier

Senior Art Director

Blizzard Entertainment

Twitter: @samdidier

Portfolio: www.samdidier.com

ArtStation: www.artstation.com/samdidier

Facebook: www.facebook.com/samdidier

Instagram: www.instagram.com/samdidier

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/samdidier

Google+: www.google.com/+samdidier

YouTube: www.youtube.com/samdidier

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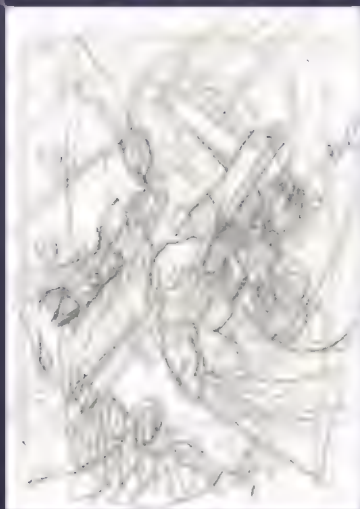
ArtStation: www.artstation.com/samdidier

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ArtStation: www.artstation.com/samdidier

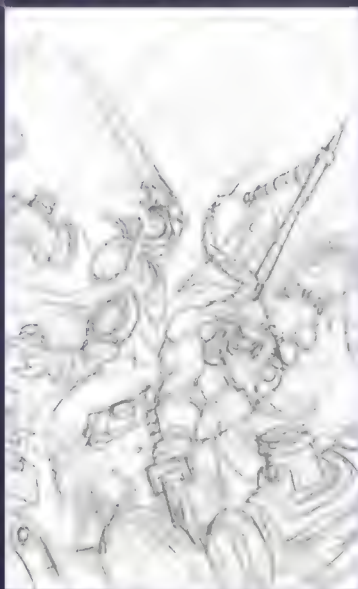
1 Initial thumbnails

Pencil and paper is my favourite form for creating art. I love Photoshop, but for getting down some ideas, nothing beats going back to basics. So with paper and pencil in hand, I start doing some thumbnails. Well, actually only one thumbnail. I know exactly what I want to do: Blademaster and Dark Templar beating the hell out of nameless minions on a far-off world. See that random moon back there? It's there mostly as a placeholder. I might make it clouds or a mountain. Something back there that won't detract from the battle, but adds a sense of depth. But we're wasting time. No need to draw this process out any longer than I need to. I've found out over time that the best idea is usually the first one.



2 Rough pencils

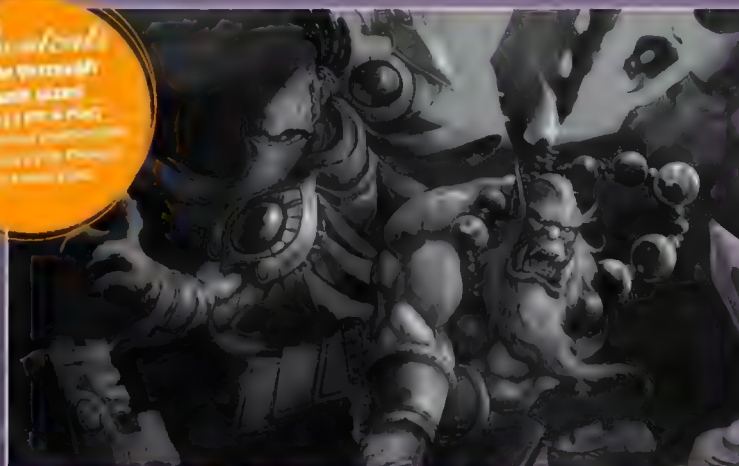
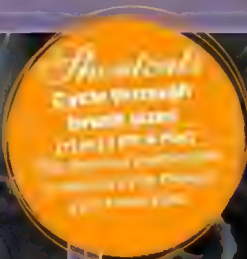
Now that my thumbnail is scribbled on the finest copy paper, it's time to scan it and get to work on the line art. I make a new layer and draw directly over the thumbnail. This process is where I'll tweak, adjust and shape the characters and define the forms of the robotic minions my two heroes will be battling. To me, the thumbnail is just the basic concept of what the image will be, so don't be afraid to tweak some of the shapes and scales of the scanned image. I make my lines very loose, because I know I'll be covering them all up with my next step.



3 Basic tones

Now comes the real meat of the process. I love this part! I make a new layer, set it to Multiply and flood-fill the layer with a mid-range grey colour. Now that the base tone is set I'll start highlighting areas with a slightly brighter tone and making shadows with one a bit darker. The image starts appearing now and I can clearly see what areas I need to define and what will fall to shadow. ➔





6 Add points of interest to Zeratul

Zeratul and the Blademaster are the focus of this piece, so I really like to spend a lot of time getting all their tones and details rounded out. I'll zoom in to 50 per cent, scale and start adding highlights to the jewels and folds in Zeratul's mask. I don't tend to zoom in any farther when I'm working on an image, because a lot of it becomes lost when you zoom back out and you'll have wasted a lot of time on something that isn't noticeable.

4 Starting on the details

This is really shaping up now. My Blademaster is hewing through one little robotic minion and Zeratul is hacking down some other little minions. It's looking good, but something isn't right. I'm watching two of the most badass swordsmen in the Blizzard universes getting ganged up on by little mechanical drones. No, this will not suffice. We need to fix this.

7 Polishing ogres and minions

With my heroes looking sharp and detailed it's now time to spruce up our bad guys. The heroes' poses have been established and set, so now I can move around my bad guys and make sure their poses and scales are in good proportion with the heroes. I'll also start adding to their costumes and overall tones.



PRO SECRETS

Listen and don't watch

When you're working on a piece, it's important to take breaks and listen to music. I listen to a lot of rock and metal, and it helps me stay motivated and focused. I also like to listen to podcasts and audiobooks. It's a good way to keep your mind sharp and your creativity flowing. I also like to listen to the Blizzard universe, and it helps me stay in character when I'm working on a piece. I listen to a lot of podcasts and audiobooks, and it helps me stay motivated and focused. I also like to listen to the Blizzard universe, and it helps me stay in character when I'm working on a piece.

5 Adding some worthy foes and polishing Blademaster

Who said, bigger isn't better? I'm going to take out those silly little guys in the background and add something big and hero crushing. Ogres. And not just one ogre, but a pair of two-headed ogre mercenaries with cybernetic optical goggles, scatter guns and big ol' armoured shoulder pads bolted to their chests! Now those are worthy foes for our heroes to be cutting down. Phew, crisis averted. I continue forward and start polishing the Blademaster. As I have always said, this is why you should do multiple thumbnails to get the image down correctly. Ahem.



8 Drop in a colour layer

With the tones and shapes of all my heroes and villains established I can finally get onto my favourite part: the colouring! If you've ever seen a game by Blizzard Entertainment, you know that we love colour. And with this picture I intend to use every colour Photoshop has! I make a new layer and set it to Color mode. Resting high and mighty above all the others, this layer will be the base of all my colours. I pick a nice green and hit up the Blademaster, then pick some purple that's worthy of a prince and start colouring Zeratul. I continue this process until the image is no longer a black and white picture, but an image with lots and lots of colour!

9 Starting colours in Normal mode

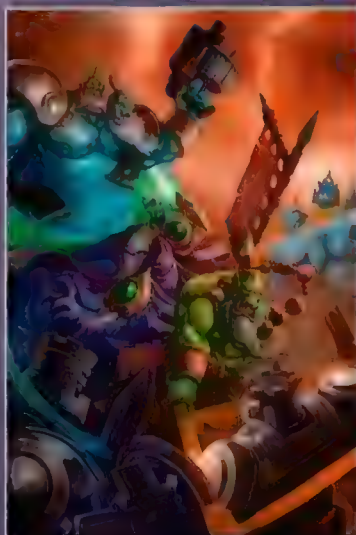
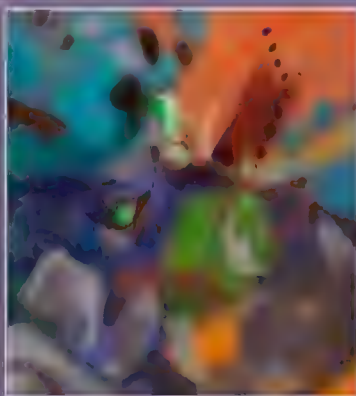
Here is what the colours look like when I turn off Color mode and set it to Normal. By creating a detailed black and white image, I don't have to worry about the various colours and tones. I can focus on the basic image and then when everything is defined, add the Color layer over it and it's all magically shaded in the correct colours! I'll go with these colours for now, but I have a feeling that to keep the focus on the heroes, that badass orange sky is going to be a problem. I will trudge on, undaunted!

10 Starting on the highlights

With my Color layer established, I create a layer above it – just a Normal layer, no magic this time. I start the same way I did earlier, with my newly green friend, the Blademaster. Here I will go in, with colour now, and start going over him and adding more details. The Color layer works for about 90 per cent of all your colouring needs, but it doesn't replace good ol' fashioned digital painting. I'm going to repeat the same process for all of my boys – Zeratul, ogres and robo minions – until they're all roughly final. I know I'll be going back to each of them over the course of this image. Once a separate layer, I start painting the deadly sword arcs, as our heroes cut through their doomed foes.

11 Changing the colour of the sky

Let's look towards the sky. With my colours more or less established, I need to do some minor tweaks. My pretty orange sky is going to conflict with my Blademaster's burning-orange sword energy, but the magic of Photoshop means this is an easy fix. I go back to my Color layer and replace my orange sky colour with a purplish grey. Everything underneath goes from warm oranges to cool blues and greys. Now my Blademaster's sword will really contrast against the cooler coloured sky.



12 Colour adjustments polish

So all my colours are squared away and I'm going through the march to completion. All of my changes are all but finished as I work on the base forms and colours. After this it's time to move on to the final effects and lighting.



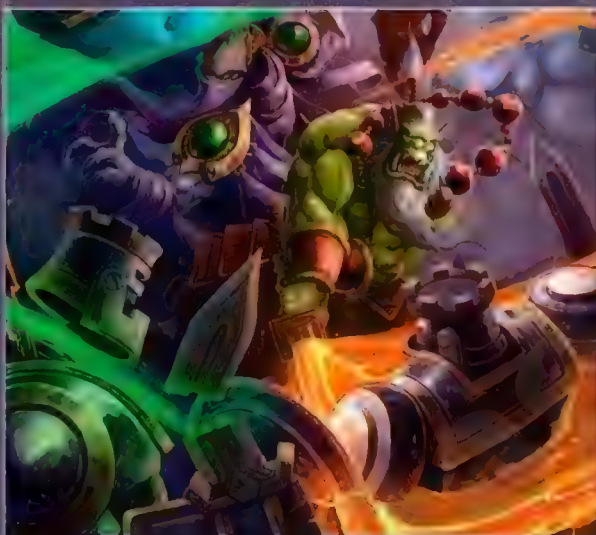
PRO SECRETS

Hold back on detailing

When I create a new image, I start with a simple, clean canvas. I don't want to get too detailed too early, as I want to keep the focus on the overall composition and colour. I'll add details as I go, but I'll keep the main elements simple and clean. This way, I can focus on the overall look and feel of the image, rather than getting bogged down in the details. I'll add details as I go, but I'll keep the main elements simple and clean. This way, I can focus on the overall look and feel of the image, rather than getting bogged down in the details.

13 Initial effects pass

I go over the initial sword strokes I did earlier, with more attention to detail. I'm going to really push the colour here and add sparks and embers that will be the foundation of the energy arcs.



14 Planet and final lighting pass

With the hard work out of the way I'm free to have some fun. I'm going to go over everything with an attention to adding final details and effects. Hell, I'm even going to commit and paint the planet I had sitting on my thumbnail sketch so long ago. Sometimes elements like this don't make it to the final image, but I think the planet will add more depth to the image. All final lighting and final effects are done at this stage too. And the most important part... sign your artwork! Boom, the picture is done.





ADD LIFE TO YOUR CHARACTER ART

Paul Sullivan designs a figure with convincing storytelling elements and explains how the process applies to a video game production pipeline

Artist PROFILE

Paul Sullivan
COUNTRY: US



Originally from Denver, Colorado, Paul went to school at

Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design. He started his entertainment industry career doing concept art for video games and film, and is now an art director in the animation industry.
www.pencilprimate.com

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WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
BLOCKOUT BRUSH

I used this brush because it had some textured loose edges that helped me to achieve my "staying loose" approach.

I was asked by the ImagineFX team to do a workshop on designing a character or creature with movement and action. To do this I needed to delve into the mind of my character and think about his life, story and what makes him tick. Once I fully understand what I'm trying to say with my design, I'm then able to attempt to let the character communicate with the viewer.

I'll be talking about different techniques for approaching your action

and gesture sketching after finding the design. Then I'll take you through my digital painting thought process in producing an effective design that could be used as a video game concept image.

The entertainment industry can be fast paced and you have to think on your feet. There's not always time for doing beautiful drawings and rough sketches before you find the final result, so I take what works and do what ever it takes to get what I want. If I need to borrow pieces and parts of another sketch to achieve a

more solid design, I will do that. When my final goal is to produce a finished painting, I want to spend as much of the little time I have to get that painting looking right!

I try to stay very loose and energetic in my approach, not just with drawing but also with painting. This helps me keep my excitement. I want that excitement and spontaneity to come out to the viewer when they look at the final image. If I'm not excited about the work I'm doing, then no one will be.

1 Find your design

I start with a couple of rough sketches to figure out my design. I think about what are the basic shapes? How can some supporting design elements add depth and energy to the character? How would he move and what's his attitude? I want elongated but strong bold shapes. I can support the design by adding a skull, a primitive obsidian axe that looks hand-crafted with a bone handle, and stringy hair from living a rough life. I figure he could wield his axe with a lot of force, so his upper body would have to be big enough to support this strength. Simplify and solidify your thoughts in this stage.



WATCH THIS!

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2 Capture the pose and attitude

Once you've thought through your character design ideas, try to sketch them out by starting with strong lines of action. Add masses on top of your action lines and then define the form more clearly. Work the entire drawing up at once, and try not to get caught up in detail at this stage.



PRO SECRETS

Stay loose

Keep your ideas loose and malleable as you go through your thought process. If a better idea comes up, change the sketch. Don't get attached to your drawing or, better yet, you're ready to call it finished. Trust yourself: draw and paint with confidence, and don't be afraid to make bold decisions. This will be easier once you've been through your work-flow process a few times. If your painting isn't looking good right away, trust the process you've been through and try not to freak out!

3 Try different approaches

There are many ways to find your drawing. Sometimes it helps to come up with different processes that the original approach was limiting. The first sketch starts with a line. I start the second with a silhouette and then add the line. Sometimes I start with a light drawing to plan out my sketch, then ink it. Experiment with these to find what helps your thought process the most.

4 Choose the pose

After picking a pose I feel best helps describe my character, I bring that idea out more. I like the pose with less action for this one – I feel that it helps us focus on the character and enables his design to tell the story without getting too caught up in the action. But something isn't sitting well with me. So I go to paper and sketch out a thumbnail that I feel is closer to the character I want to convey. These drawings can be useful in the animation stage and help communicate to the team what the character is all about and how he moves.

WATCH THIS!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FAX90-awz



Shortcuts

Copy merge and paste

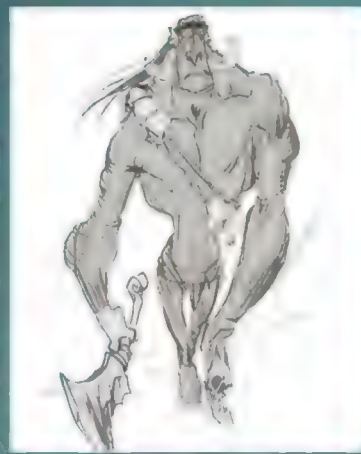
Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)

Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)

When my art is done I paste it into a new document

5 Beg, borrow and steal...

...from yourself, that is! I like some of the skulls and the axe I already sketched digitally. So I cut those out from one and slap them on the other one. After a few minor Free Transform tweaks in Photoshop, the base thumbnail sketch is looking closer to what I imagined. I do this to save time in the sketch phase. If my final result was the drawing, I would make sure this was consistent and tidy looking. However, because I'm going to paint over all of this and use it as a base, it saves me time not to fuss around with a drawing I'm not going to use as the final presentation to the client.

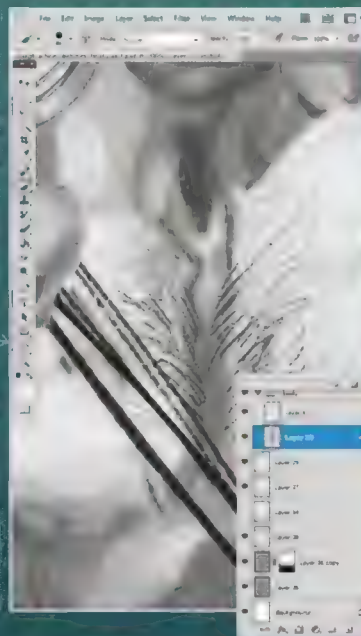


6 Flesh out your drawing

After making the changes at the sketch stage, I force myself to think about shape more than line by covering up my drawing with local value separations. I'm trying to figure out how I'll separate my values from each other to help have a quicker read. I decide I want the body to be very pale and the background to be darker, so that the character separates and reads quickly.

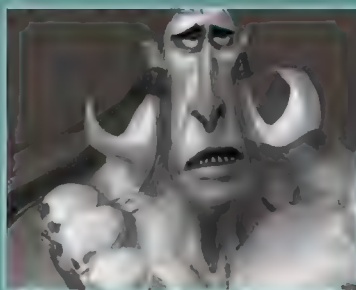
7 Make simple shapes

I try to place certain things on separate layers, which enables me to paint behind and on top of them easier. I want to separate the head from the body, so I paint the shape of the head and lock the layer. I can add more controlled value to that area by doing this. I can also easily add a drop shadow on the form below without disrupting my layer on top.



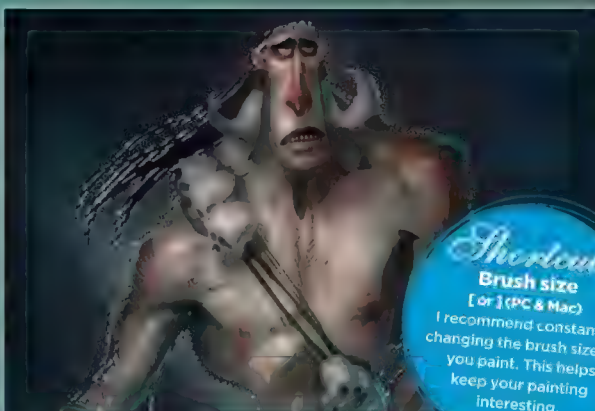
8 Flatten, commit and erase

Once I find the basic value separations I flatten the shapes. Then I erase from the flattened character layer to keep the shape and silhouette strong on my design. I try to always allow for changes during each stage of the process, as long as doing so helps to make my final design stronger.



9 Lay down the base colour

I ask myself, what do I want my dominant colour to be in the piece. After deciding that it would be nice to experiment with a pale, cool blue green colour, I fill a layer with that colour and then set the layer mode to Hard Light. The results can vary depending on what you're trying to achieve, but by using different layer properties it helps me get the underpainting right by glazing colour over the value sketch I just did.



Shortcuts
Brush size
[or] (PC & Mac)
I recommend constantly changing the brush size you paint. This helps keep your painting interesting.

12 Bring the colours together

I use a Color Balance layer to bring out the warm tones in the skin a bit more. Then I paint into the layer mask on the layer with black and a Soft brush with Opacity pen pressure settings, to paint out some of the Color Balance adjustment that I don't let affect my colour.

13 Paint opaque

I now colour pick the base colours I came up with and make adjustments, depending on what variations I'm trying to achieve in the painting. I choose variations in the flesh tones and paint them with an opaque brush. This helps my underpainting do most of the work and with the colour I put on top I can really help to direct where I want the viewer to look by adding more opaque highlights and saturated colour in spots.



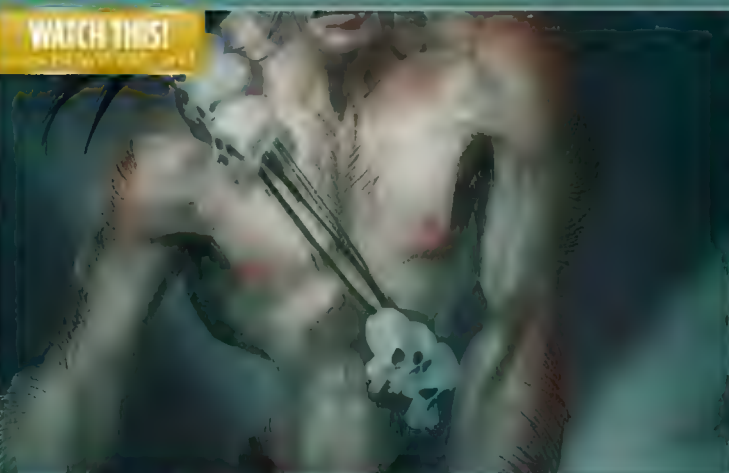
14 Finishing touches

I'm pleased with where the painting is for the most part, so I analyse the values again and realise that I need to push the dark areas lighter on the character and the dark areas darker in the background. After adding a Soft Light layer with a light colour on it on top of the character, I darken the background a bit more and clean up the edges. Finally, I add a few highlights on his nose, teeth and lips to really make that area look wet. Boom, drop the stylus and walk away.

PRO SECRETS

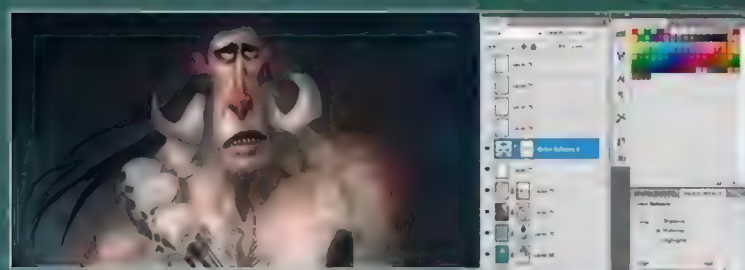
Handle one thing at a time

Simplify your stages and make sure you're not jumping ahead in your process before you've answered your basic questions. Try to have a strong idea of where you're going before you start rendering an eyeball. Take some time figuring it out before moving on to the colour stage, do research, some rough sketches on paper, and make sure your thoughts are clear on how to tackle your task.



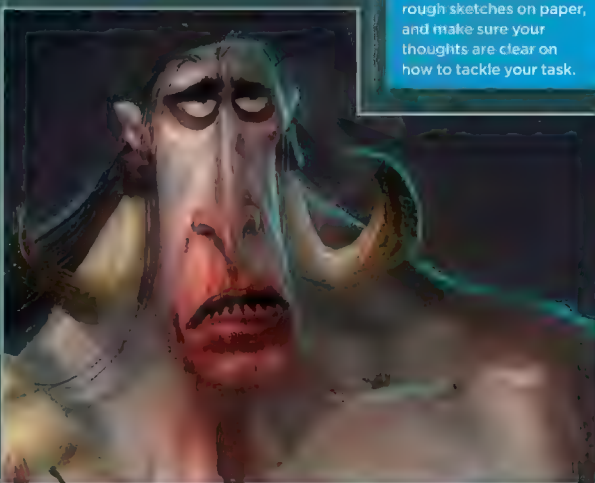
10 Glaze colour and overlay texture

At this stage, I'm still finding the colours and balancing them out. I decide I want the blue green to affect the colours I use in the character, so I lightly brush in the local colour separations and then bring them all together by adding some texture overlays of paintings I did prior to this one. I add layer masks to them and paint out where the texture is too high or the colour is changing too much. But this somewhat random approach helps me to keep things exciting with the colour, and experience those happy accidents. I usually go back and forth making the layer opaque and painting out some



11 Select your shapes and flatten

Once I figure out the basic colour direction for my painting, I select the character and copy merge the layers on the top of my layered file. This might seem like a scary thing, but it helps to commit to your colours and paint on top of your base to keep your painting looking fresh and your colours looking vibrant.



Photoshop & 3ds Max SHOW A DYNAMIC ACTION SCENE

Arman Akopian was inspired to paint a sexy manga character, but then decided to add some realistic elements into the mix...

Artist PROFILE

Arman Akopian
COUNTRY: Canada

Arman was born in Armenia and moved to Canada in his late teens. He's now working as a concept artist at the Square/Eidos studio in Montreal.
www.bit.ly/irx-aakopian

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/3d-tanno

The Honey Thief didn't even start as a real project. The initial drive behind me working on this image was the desire to sketch something anime-like.

I was watching Appleseed Ex Machina and the thought of painting a curvy, big-breasted cyber vixen with eyes the size of a platter seemed like the right thing to do. Not my usual choice of style, but Masamune Shiro was a big influence for me so I thought this can be fun. And there are few things in this world that are as inspiring as a female body.

So with that mindset I grabbed the Wacom pen and started grinding. The main challenge for me was to make her as dynamic as possible. Initially, I thought of having her jump over an obstacle using her arm as a point of leverage. It's very important in an exercise like this to set up effective action lines for the body. But as I worked further and flipped the image around a few times looking for bugs to clean, her pose seemed to be more coherent to me in the context of running and dodging something at the same time.



Enhance the anime style

I want the thief to have an anime-like face and features. Curvy lines, bright hair and exaggerated body curves. However, I decide to deviate a little from the canonical her colour rendering and add some semi-realistic details. Some colour temperature on the face and some sweat highlights on the skin help giving her a livelier look.

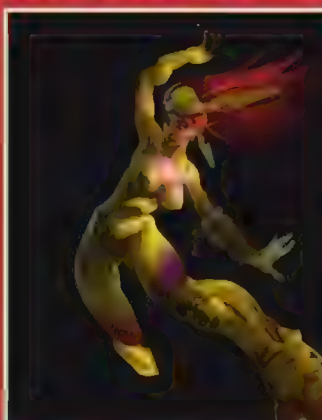
How I create...

A CYBERNETIC THIEF



1 Lines of action

Setting up a dynamic pose is the first thing that I need to nail. A great way of doing this is to use something animators refer to as the line of action. It's an imaginary line (or not in this case) that goes through the character strengthening the dramatic effect of the pose and focusing the purpose of the motion. In the character's mind's eye.



2 Shapes and colours

Using large strokes with a Hard Round brush I lay in the girl's main shapes. This is where the relationship between light and dark areas is established. Now I start thinking about colour. The idea is to make her look fast, so a bright yellow with some purple stripes or markings seemed right. It makes her look like a racing car of sorts.



3 The polishing

Here is where I start polishing the details and tweaking out the bugs. Adding detailed decals on the mechanical parts, little scratches on the metal and a little skin texture on the face is part of the process. I also do some final colour tweaking. It's that last 20 per cent of the work that usually takes up 80 per cent of the whole time spent on the image.



Lighting

For this image I use a three-point light setup. The main is a warm light that hits the character slightly from behind, allowing the creation of self-shadows that add to the volume of the girl's shape. The other two are the cold blue light from the wall panels and the neutral fill light from the back of the tunnel. They both serve to outline the silhouette of the girl and the bees, helping the viewer read them better against the complex background detail.



Storytelling elements

I need something to justify her dodging a danger and that's where the idea of having bees chasing her comes to me. At that point it stops being only about the girl and more about about telling a story. I paint the first bee and then replicate them around the tunnel, as if they're after her since she's stolen their honey.



A little 3D help

Using 3ds Max I create the initial hexagon shape and by extruding it in various manners, make the first section of the corridor. Later I use a modifier called 'greeble' to add extra random detail to the walls. The can of stolen honey is also done with 3ds Max. Finally I add the light panels on the wall, making them the light source for the rim light on the girl and the bees.

Draw from real life

The design of the robotic parts has to be elegant, but it also has to be credible. Think of all the mechanics and electrical equipment that surrounds us. Painting in all the little instructions or warning signs, connection seams, and bolts and rivets adds to the credibility and breaks the uniformity of your shapes, making them interesting to look at.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:

BLENDER

DECAL 1

DECAL 2

PAINT 1

PAINT 2

Having a proper set of brushes is key to my work. Here I need a simple fading Hard Round brush, some mechanical decal brushes and a colour blender brush that I use with the Smudge tool. It also may serve as a hair creator with the Simple Brush tool.

DESIGN A PET MECH WITH PERSONALITY

Vaughan Ling shows how animal and vehicle references can give your mech designs real character. Now, where can we buy a DogMech...?

Artist PROFILE

Vaughan Ling
COUNTRY: US



Vaughan is from Miami, but now lives in Los Angeles, where he's an

instructor at Concept Design Academy in Pasadena, California. The artist has designed vehicles for Disney, Mattel and various theme parks.

www.bit.ly/tx-vaug

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/tx-workshop

PRO SECRETS

Musical mood

Music has a huge effect on what pops out of my head. Try listening to some albums you haven't heard before, or a new internet radio station. Try genres out of your comfort zone.

I started drawing mechs in grade school, usually in math or Spanish class. At home I would copy the box art off Gundam models or even freeze frame a Patlabor VHS for reference. I had a habit of drawing mecha lizard dissections where the insides were made of gears, pulleys and motors. The satisfaction of taking an idea through to noodle perfection was something that kept me drawing over the years. Suddenly it's 2012 and people are paying me to doodle!

I don't draw on lined paper any more and I'm proud to say that I've graduated from mecha lizards to mecha dogs. This scene represents a hopeful future where kids have rejected their genius phones, tabular devices and 10G internet. Instead, they pursue normal activities such as time travel, hoverboarding or hoverwalking. Here we see a boy with his DogMech, exploring the misty forest under a starry sky.

This workshop explains the theory and technique behind this piece. In my

opinion, the more important and difficult part to learn is theory. Anyone can figure out how to press buttons in Photoshop.

Another thing that's not evident here are the studies of motorcycle frames, suspensions, joints, engines and anatomy that I've done over the years in order to be able to piece together this kind of design. Half the battle in illustration is visual research! If you don't do the homework, then your designs and mechanisms will usually look unrealistic or even physically impossible. Let's get started!

1 Break the blank

The beginning is the most exciting, important and frustrating part of the process. I start by spreading marks across the canvas just so I have something to stare at. I want shapes to emerge from the mess, like looking for patterns in clouds. The important thing is to be carefree at this stage and just doodle away. The more you intellectualise or use the left side of your brain, the more mentally constipated you'll feel.

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/tx-X90-mech1



2 A plethora of possibilities

I produce a series of rough sketches, throwing them out as I go along until I finally find something that interests me. The sketch of the mech sniffing the ground looks a lot like a dog to me. I like the concept, but the composition and pose feel a bit static, so I dispose of the sketch and continue to riff off the concept of the DogMech. It's important to spend time at this early stage to make sure that you have a loose sketch with strong potential. There's absolutely no point in spending hours polishing a bad idea.



3 Design decisions

A picture of a bloodhound sniffing the ground helps me design the pose and structure of the DogMech. The shape of the body and limbs have been borrowed from the bloodhound. I've exaggerated the shoulder blades and the size difference between the rib cage and stomach. Pistons and joints help to visually explain the function of the legs. I look at space station docking rings for the collar and a motorcycle frame for the rib cage. Antennae tail and Plexiglass solar panel ears make the design unmistakably doggish.







4 Have more humans

4 **Doggies** It's knocking a bit timely at this point, as it gets a bit more confusing. A human has its name on Doggie's back, since that's what everyone who's ever had a dog wants to do. (My dog is too nervous to let me ride him around.) They and Doggie's owners have their respective, by now, final names.

6 Crafty composition

One detail, lighting and composition, to control a viewer's focus is a painting. The movie act as a director in the frame, while it says to the viewer, "Keep your eyes in the center." Lighter colors that are generally concentrated in the middle of the foreground, middle ground and background help strengthen the effect. Throughout the image I've constantly searching out and identifying targets, points where there are more links more. These are generally egg and those he deals with accordingly.



7 Lock 'n' load

When you're satisfied with the composition and lighting, block in 1/3000 to paint in detailed areas piece by piece. To start with, DogMochi's head and keep a few materials in mind: light mud for the main body; dark mud for the (furry) neck, ears, paws, and face; and highly textured clay for the snout. With reference materials, a few silhouettes becomes a whole and different-looking surface. Keep in mind that light colors also tend to catch light.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

**CUSTOM BRUSHES:
CHALK ALL PURPOSE
BRUSH**

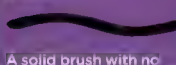


I use this for blocking in value. The top and bottom edges have some nice roughness.

NOTES

painting in atmosphere
or gradients, I use this
with masks a lot, too.

NAME



A solid brush with no opacity control. The ellipse is good for getting tighter corners than you can with a circle.

VARIABLE



This expressive brush can produce tight solid lines or big gradients, depending on pressure.

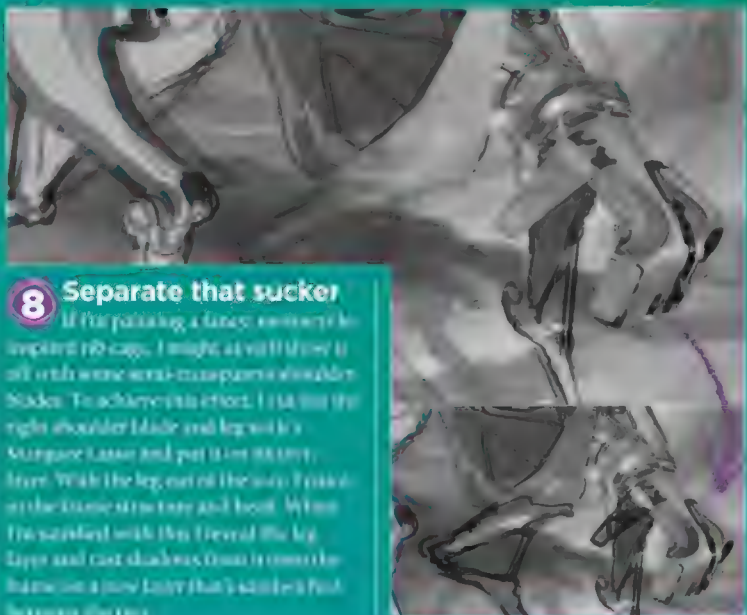
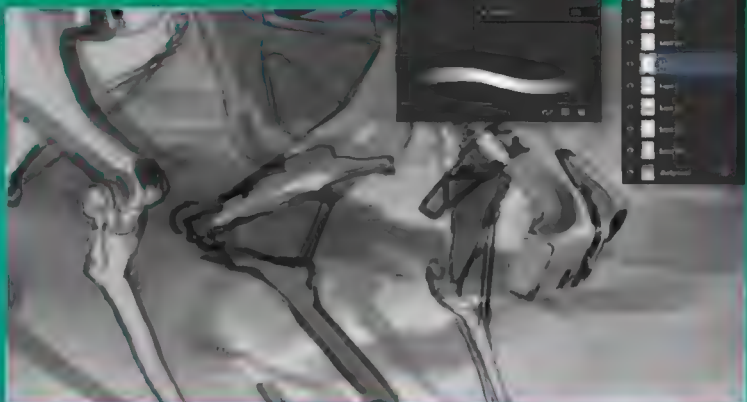
BRISTLE

I use this with the Smudge tool to simulate



5 Try some trees

For thinking that a mysterious, dark forest would be a cool environment for those men to explore, I'm also adding some very true black and white shading in the background so that the figures popping out of the shadows can help capture attention and, with the final piece, look like, in this piece, light is well being brought to the world of the forest. I'm going after the surreal, I'm using the family theme to transcend normal values. This helps produce a unique quality to my illustrations.



8 Separate that sucker

If I'm pulling a dancer's arm over his head, I might as well move it off with some semi-musclepower shoulder blades. To achieve this effect, I slide my right shoulder blade and leg work (Margareta Larsson and part three) over there. With the leg, out of the way. I push it in the same direction and back. When I'm satisfied with this, I pull the leg down and rest under the foot (I mean the dance on a new layer than I did in the first because the first).

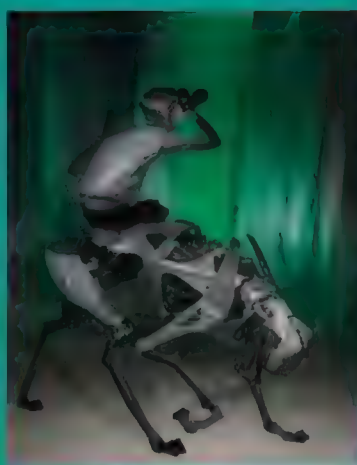
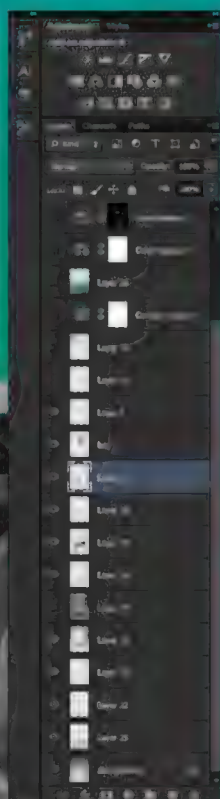


9 Sound structure

I'm moving on to the far leg, paying special attention to the hinges and pistons. For these elements I suggest studying robotic factory arms, heavy construction equipment and remote control or real vehicle suspension. I'm also painting in subtle details such as the lattice structure on the upper leg, which suggests a strong/lightweight construction. Detail can quickly become overwhelming if it is used without restraint. I like to hide detail in shadows or otherwise use a limited value range to keep it from overpowering the image.

10 Never-ending noodle

At this point I go through a few iterations for the front legs, add a power source inside the ribcage and noodle the mech to death. I want to get as far as I can in this black and white stage before moving on to colour. I'm also adjusting values without repainting by using the Lasso tool on certain areas, then going through some Levels options. This is the most tedious, time-consuming stage, but if you stick with it the results will make happiness for all.



11 Curves 'n' colours

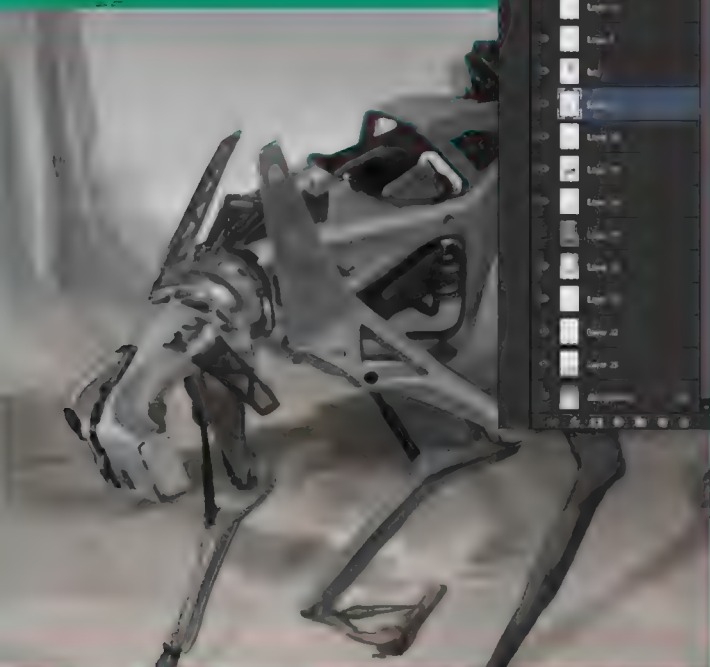
Black and white is great fun, but I'll add colour since I'm told this is going to be in a fancy magazine. In this 'colour wash' stage, I mainly use Curves and Color Balance Adjustment layers as well as Overlay layers. Once I have these elements down, I control their strength with Masks, which can create some surprising results. This is an iterative process: I fiddle with it until it looks pretty.

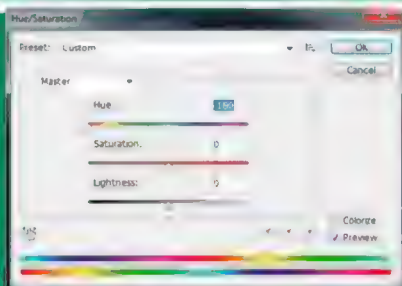
12 Flesh out the forest

I chop up an image of an aurora to help get some texture and colour into the forest. The eerie green glow is perfect for the mood I'm after. A quick Hue/Saturation matches the image to the values of the forest. I pick colours from the image to paint into the background, and colours from the background to paint into the image. Going back and forth like this is a way to integrate any photo into an illustration seamlessly.

13 Sneak in some smoke

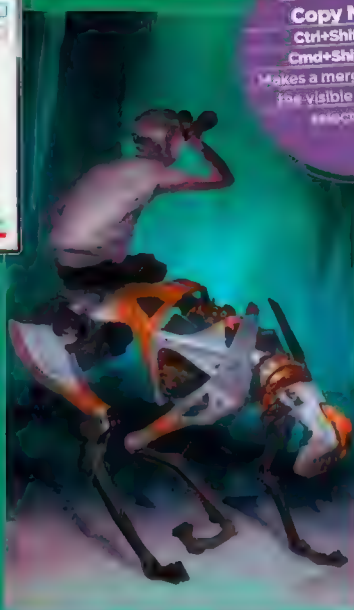
I use blue smoke liberally to enhance mood and atmosphere as well as define the back-, mid- and foreground. It helps sell the idea of a mysterious, mystical forest. But really it's because I'm lazy and fog covers up all those tedious details I'd have to otherwise paint. Use a big Soft brush with a bit of Scatter, Angle and Size Jitter, and it never hurts to do some studies if you're new to smoke.



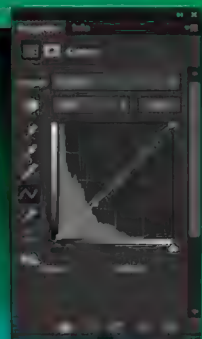


14 Apply Overlay layers

I use an Overlay layer to add colour to Boy's flesh and DogMech's accent paint. To keep the Overlay layer masked to the characters, I place it over the character layer and Alt+click the line in between them. This locks the top layer to the bottom layer's pixels. Duplicate this layer and then Hue Shift (Ctrl+U) to generate a colour shift in your highlights. A striking anodised purple colour is simple to create when you've got two Overlay layers working together.

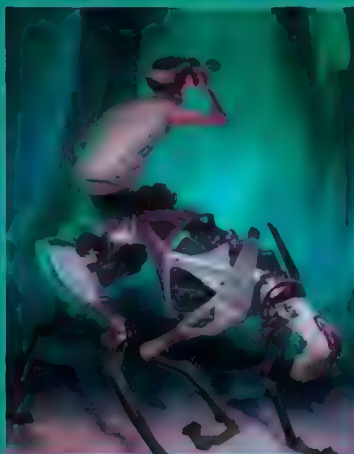


Shortcuts
Copy Merged
Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)
Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)
Makes a merged copy of all the visible layers in the selected area.



15 Warp some words

To add details like text along the hind legs, I position the text, duplicate the text layer and merge them, which rasterises the text. I warp the text by pressing Ctrl+T, then Right Click in the Transform box and select Warp. Then I merge Boy, DogMech and accent colour/text into the same layer. Next I paint in some blue reflecting onto the characters from the environment. This helps integrate the characters into the background.



16 Quality control

Now I go back in on one final pass and solidly paint over parts that need clearer edges, stronger colours, general touch-ups. I gave Boy big, goofy cartoon ears and added some blue rim lighting to him and DogMech. It's important to take a break, have a friend take a look with fresh eyes and look at your piece flipped (I flip often enough to warrant creating a custom keyboard shortcut: Ctrl+W [Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts]).



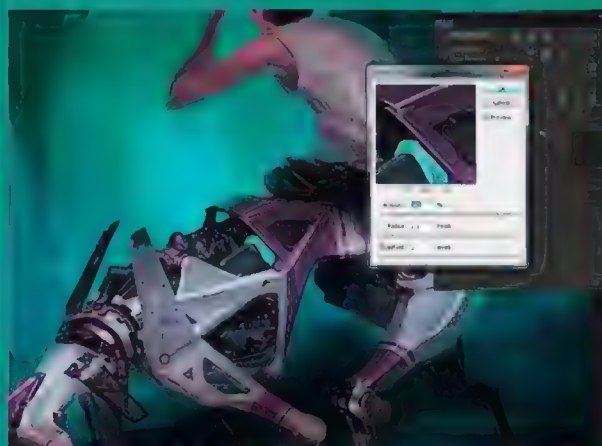
PRO SECRETS

Colour variety

A trick to quickly add variation in your colour palette is to add Masks to your Adjustment layers. This enables you to control their strength in certain areas of your image.

17 Better background

Here I'm adding subtle details to the background like pebbles and knots in the trees. What I mean by subtle is I'm staying very close to the already established values by colour picking from areas nearby. I definitely don't want these background details to be competing with the main focal point (characters). Think of the background details as dessert and characters as the main course.



18 Finish with a filter frenzy

For a little extra spice, copy everything onto a single layer using Copy Merged, then add some filters! The tried and true Unsharp Mask (Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask) gives your edges more pop. Filter>Other>High Pass can simplify your strokes a bit. Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur will blur your image and when used with a Mask can produce interesting depth of field effects. Sign your work, add your site URL and release it into the wild!

Painter

EXPLORE NEW WORKSPACES



Painter's free workspace downloads will help you create art like the pros in no time, says **Cher Threinen-Pendarvis**

Whether you're a concept designer, illustrator or photographer working in Painter, you'll certainly benefit from exploring Corel's artists' workspaces. These unique workspaces enable you to choose a workspace of your own for specific activities – getting bespoke workspaces for concept drawing, watercolour painting and much more.

Here I'll give an overview of the concept sketch, creativity, illustration, portrait, collage and watercolour workspaces created by Painter Masters artists.

What's more, you can download the workspaces at this link: www.bit.ly/ifx-workspaces and view the artists describing their workspaces and grab your own free trial version of Painter here: www.bit.ly/ifx-masters.

Artist PROFILE

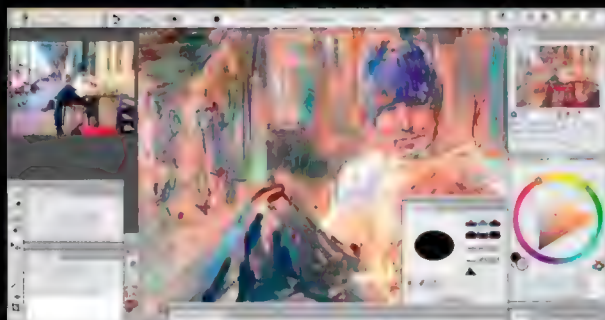
Cher Threinen-Pendarvis
COUNTRY: US



Cher is an award-winning artist, designer, educator, speaker and author of all 10 editions of The Painter Wow! books. www.bit.ly/ifx-cherftp

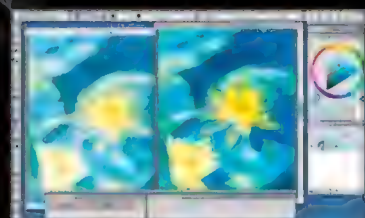
4 Portrait and Collage Workspace

Jeremy Sutton offers an efficient, flexible work environment. The most noticeable feature is his Shortcuts palette, which includes useful commands and shortcuts to his favourite brushes. There's also the Brush Controls palette with the useful Dab Profile and Size panel visible, as well as the Navigator panel, Colors and Layers panels. The Clone Source and Color Variability panel are also displayed. Uniquely there are palette layouts for multiple screen resolutions.



5 Watercolour Workspace

My Watercolour workspace is designed for simple, efficient painting. The brush set is focussed on the brushes and tools for sketching and painting with Painter's Watercolor media. The interface removes distractions and gives the essential tools for great watercolour results. The cursor preference in Preferences is set to Iconic. The brush library includes the Blenders, Digital Watercolor, Gouache, Pencils, Real Watercolor and Watercolor.



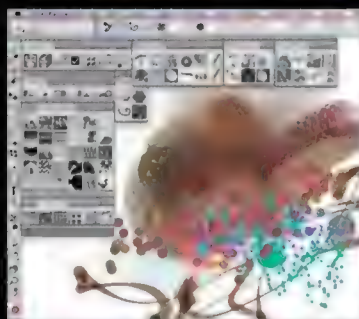
1 Concept Sketching Workspace

Dwayne Vance shares an efficient and simple workspace, without on-screen clutter. His customised brush library features few brushes, so he can focus on his favourites. The categories included are Airbrushes, Digital, Watercolour, Erasers, FX, Markers, Pastels and Pencils. The workspace also features the Navigator panel, the Color panels and the Layer and Channels panels.



2 Creativity Workspace

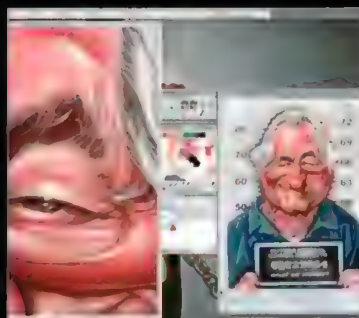
Andrew Jones's complex workspace has many custom palettes that feature command actions, brushes, patterns, papers and shortcuts to commands so you can make your own custom tools, and more. The Take Actions palette saves a trip to the menu for Save As and so on. The Manifest palette has shortcuts to commands where you can create more tools, while the Creativity workspace has brushes, custom patterns and more.



Andrew Jones's workspace has many custom palettes, such as Take Actions palette, which saves a trip to the menu to choose Save As, Auto select and so on.

3 Illustration Workspace

Mike Thompson's workspace has a unique palette arrangement. The Brush Selector has moved to the right, so when the brush library is open, the drop-down palette doesn't cover his artwork. He's closed other palettes to free up space. For quicker access to brushes while working he's added brush palettes: Mike's Oils, Mike's Pencils and Mike's Essentials (including Oil Pastels and the Scratchboard tool).





Artist PROFILE

Annie Stegg
COUNTRY: US



Annie specialises in character design and development.

Her art has been featured in various games and publishing clients including Ballistic Publishing, Spectrum Fantastic Arts, Hi-Rez Studios and Addicting Games. In addition to these commissioned projects she spends most of her time creating her own body of work, which is inspired by folklore, mythology

and fashion.

www.anniestegg.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/90-t-fashion

Photoshop

BE CREATIVE WITH COSTUMES

Using the same base model, **Annie Stegg** demonstrates how to give a female character a range of personalities

By creating garments, detailing and weapons you can build a library of accessories to enhance a character. For this workshop, originally commissioned for Ballistic Publishing's art book d'artiste: Fashion Design, I start by creating a simple character. Because this image will act as my base, the design needs to work with as many options as possible.

When deciding on a pose it's important to have an idea of the type of character you'd like to illustrate. I begin by designing a female warrior. I give her a wide stance and position her arms to give greater options for clothing, as well as weapon choices. Skin tones, eye colour, hairstyles and makeup can all be added to give a single base multiple possibilities for design. Because of this, be sure to create

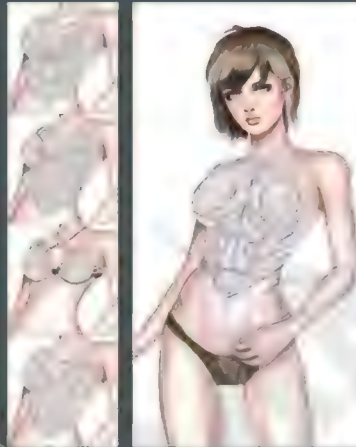
new Photoshop layers in the Layers Palette to separate the eyes, hair and skin.

Once the pose is determined, I explore options for a colour palette. This is a key stage because there'll be a multitude of pieces to design. Having a consistent colour scheme ensures each piece will work in harmony with the others, and make multiple combinations easier. Here I've chosen an autumnal colour scheme.



1 Visualisation of the character

Once I've got a clear idea of my character, I write a list of the pieces that will need to be designed, including accessories, clothing and character attributes. In Photoshop, I make the number of groups needed in the Layers Palette, and label them accordingly. I keep in mind how one would layer clothing, so the groups will be in the appropriate order – outermost pieces should be near the top of the list. All layers related to a specific category are placed in the designated groups and subgroups.



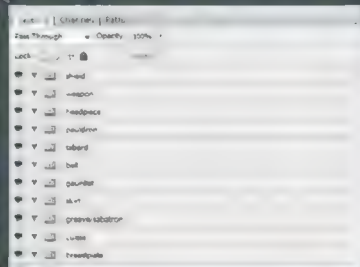
2 Designing the armour

Muscle structure is important to keep in mind when designing armour. It's helpful to take note of this by creating a new layer in Photoshop and sketching in lines to mimic the anatomy of the body. The breastplate takes up a large area of the character, so it'll be the first piece to be designed. I go to the Breastplate group in my layers panel, create a new layer subgroup, I create basic, flat, filled images of each piece of armour. When I feel comfortable with the design of the piece, I hide my sketch lines and begin to add colour.

PRO SECRETS

Using layer masks

1. *Identify the problem.*
 2. *Identify the stakeholders.*
 3. *Identify the goals.*
 4. *Identify the constraints.*
 5. *Identify the resources.*
 6. *Identify the risks.*
 7. *Identify the opportunities.*
 8. *Identify the threats.*
 9. *Identify the strengths.*
 10. *Identify the weaknesses.*



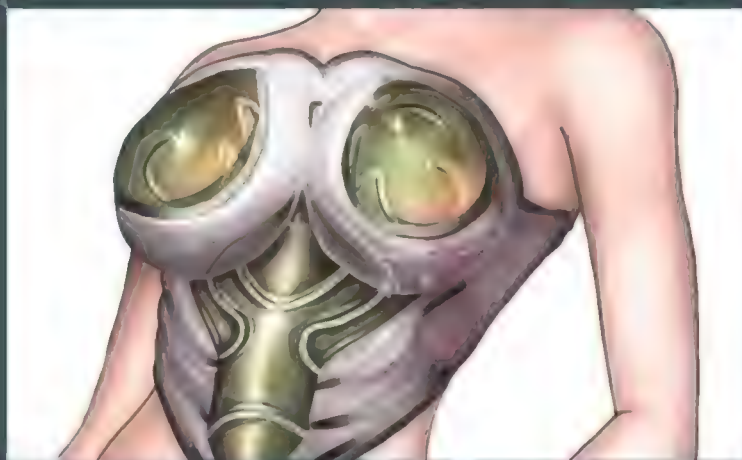
3 Colouring the armour

I select my armour (by pressing Ctrl and clicking the layer), then click the group layer and select Add Layer Mask, found on the bottom of the Layers Palette. This creates a group with an Alpha Mask, which then restricts me to painting within this selected area. For lighting, it's ideal to create two more layers: one set to Multiply and another set to Color Dodge. Using a basic Round brush, I work between both of these layers, adding definition and depth to the piece. I experiment using the different colours in my palette to achieve the desired effect.



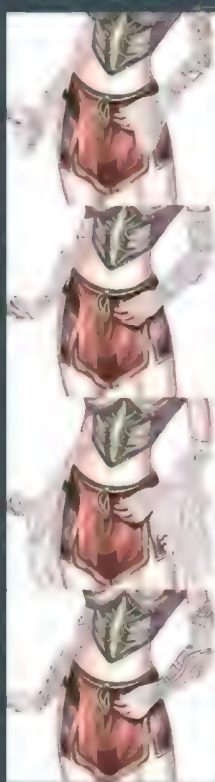
4 Adding texture

Once the basic lighting is complete, texture can be added. I create a new layer to avoid mistakes. By setting a basic Speckled brush to Screen, and putting the layer on Soft Light, I create interesting stains over the image. Using Opacity layers also helps to achieve depth. When making seams, I use a standard Round brush to follow the contours of the figure. Once completed, I double-click its layer to open the Layer Style panel.



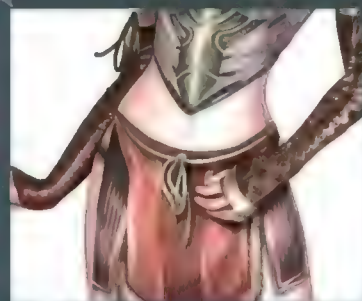
5 Designing a skirt

I paint the skirt using the previous techniques. After I've added the flat colour, I add light and shadows. Because the skirt is made of cloth, it's helpful to apply a cloth-like patterned texture. Once complete, double-click the layer to view its properties. I use Bevel and Emboss on this layer, but instead of using the preset direction Up, I change it to Down. This gives the Bevel an inset look. Finally, I set the fill of this layer to 0 per cent in the Layers Palette, and add lighting and texture underneath the seam layer.



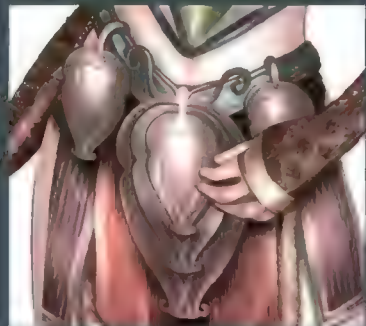
6 Painting the vambrace

I sketch all of the pieces on layers inside the appropriate folders. Once the flat colour fills have been made, I separate the piece into sections. I place the laces, seams and base cloth in sub-groups inside the master group. When making seams, I use a standard Round brush to follow the contours of the figure, then double-click its layer to open the Layer Style panel. Here, the colour of the seam can be altered and depth can be added by applying an inner shadow. The same technique can be applied to the laces. Finally, instead of adding lighting to the entire piece, I add it to specific groups. This way pieces can appear to have more reflective properties.



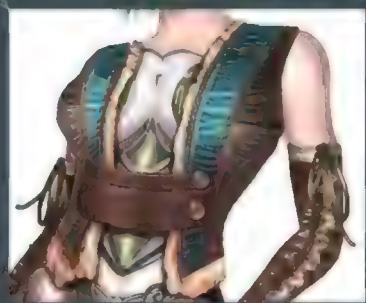
7 Drawing the belt

On a new layer, I create a basic shape and give it an interesting border design on another layer. I then select the inner area. To give the object more depth, I click Select>Modify>Contract to make the selection smaller. I add a fill to the new selection, then select all of the layers and click Ctrl+E to merge them. I now have the base for the left and right sections of the belt. To make the centrepiece, I duplicate the layer, make the piece slightly smaller, then copy this layer. My leather belt section now has three stacked parts. I transform this piece to match the angles of the sketch, then add lighting and texture.



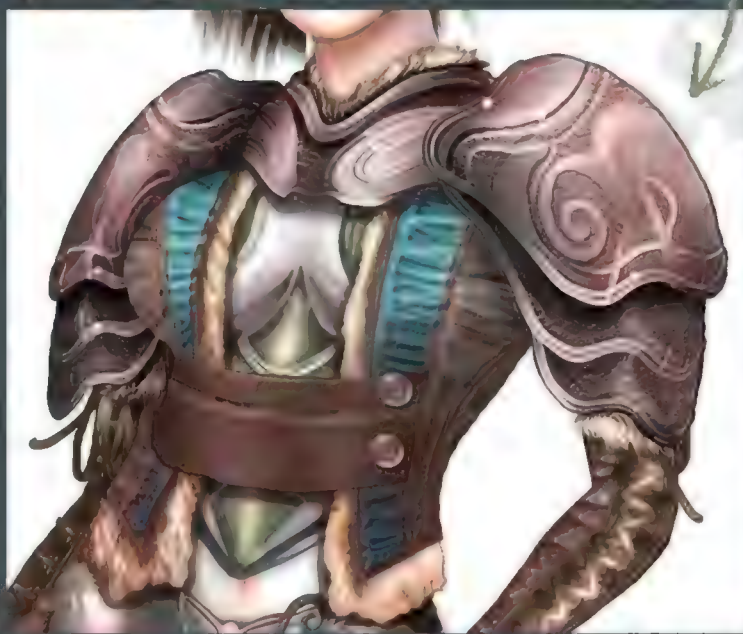
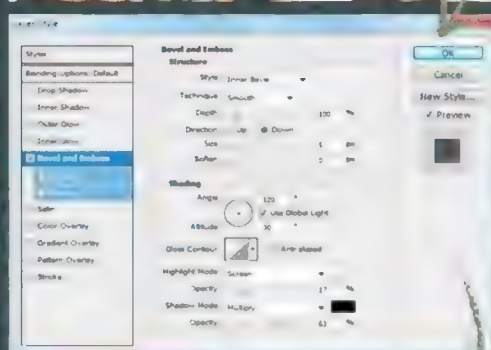
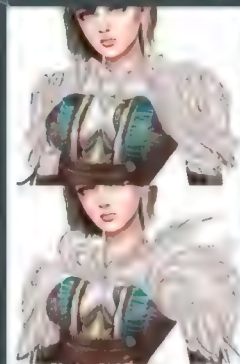
8 Onto the tabard

Because the tabard fits over the breastplate, the same anatomical sketch lines can be used to create it. Unlike the other pieces thus far, this article of clothing will require greater amounts of wrinkled cloth. After completing the basic colour fill, I create a new layer, which will contain the wrinkles for the cloth. I use the Round Feather brush to create lines where the wrinkles would be. Once complete, I double-click the layer to view its layer properties. A Bevel and Emboss effect can be added to give the cloth more depth. Lastly, I set the fill of this layer to 0 per cent in the Layer Palette. This allows the cloth's colour and texture to show through. To finish, I add lighting and texture underneath the wrinkle layer to give the garment more volume.



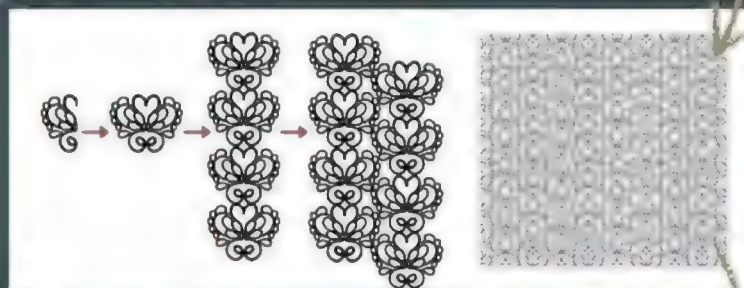
9 The pauldron

After completing the sketch and basic colour fill, I create a new layer. Inset seams will be added to this layer, giving the pauldron a layered look. Much like the wrinkles of the shirt, I draw basic lines with the Circular brush indicating where the seams will be placed. I double-click the layer to view the layer properties, and add the Bevel and Emboss Effect. As before, instead of using the preset Up, I change it to Down, to give the Bevel an inset look. I set the fill of this layer to 0 per cent in the Layer Palette, and add lighting and texture underneath the seam layer for definition.





Shortcuts
Change modes
[F5] [F6] [F7]
Use this to cycle through the different screen modes that Photoshop has to offer.



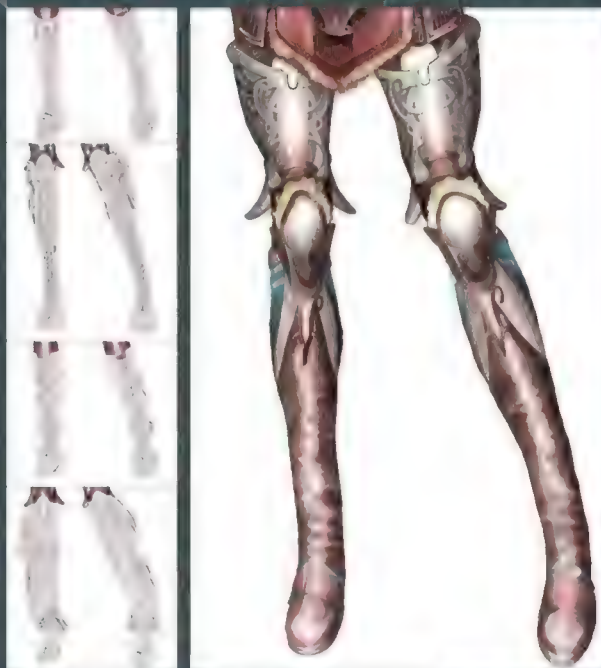
10 Placing the cuisse

When designing the cuisse, the belt and skirt groups must be hidden to give a better view of the upper thigh area. I create a new layer on top of the basic colour fill layer and create a lace pattern in the same fashion as the material for the skirt. I create half of a basic shape, copy it, then rotate it. This gives me a symmetrical design. With the Selection tool, I click the image, while holding Shift+Alt, to drag the shape down. I make several of these, then merge the layers by holding down Shift, selecting each of them and pressing Ctrl+E. I make a copy of this row in the same fashion, but this time I drag the image to the right and offset it slightly. I merge both of the rows and then repeat until the pattern has reached the desired size. I select the area where the pattern will be placed and make an Alpha Group. I place the lace pattern inside of this group and change the colour by double-clicking to open the layer's property window and then add lighting and texture.



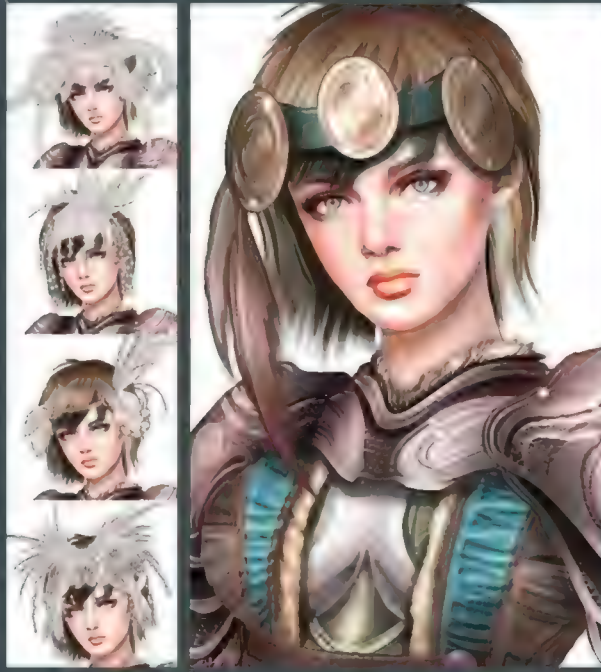
11 Crafting boots that match the cuisse

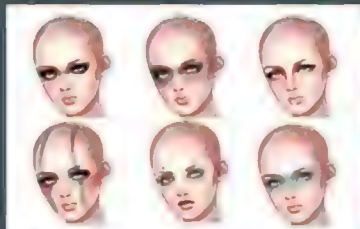
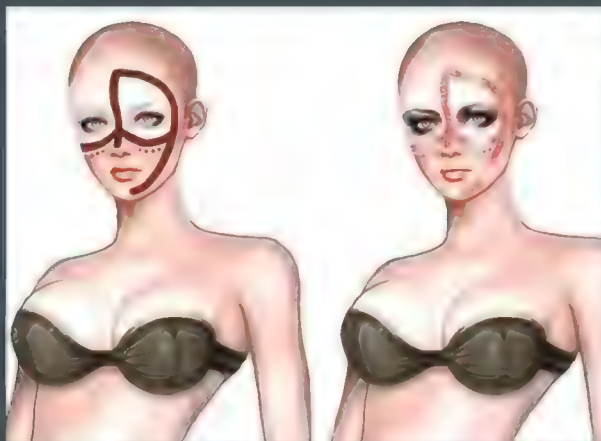
On a new layer, I sketch out lines to illustrate the end point and shape of each thigh piece. This way, boots that come up to the knee can have a matching curvature to the cuisse. Switching between pieces of armour when designing can eliminate mistakes caused from mismatched lines. When all the pieces work together, I continue to the flat colour stage, and then add lighting and shadows to the image.



12 Quickly concept a headpiece

The headpiece should match the materials used for the armour: fur, feathers, leather and metal. On a new layer, I create a basic oval shape. I make a copy, drag it to the left, flip it vertically and then horizontally. Now the swirl design is symmetrical. I select the design, click Edit>Stroke and add a border. I then select and merge these layers. I now have the base for a section of the headpiece. I use the Edit option to transform and distort this piece to match the angles of the sketch.





13 Making the makeup

I hide the layer with the hairstyle and headpiece, then make a basic line stroke, roughing the design of the makeup. I use variations of my colour palette to fill in the colour. By selecting a Speckled Eraser brush on a low Opacity, I can blot out areas to give more interest. By adding eyeliner, you can also dramatically change the shape and look of the eye.

PRO SECRETS

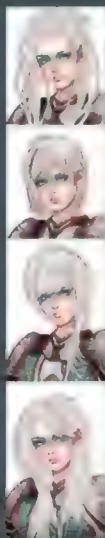
Using zoom
If you're zoomed in on a small section of your image, sometimes it's helpful to use the Photoshop Navigator panel as a guide to see the overall look of your painting, and real time changes. You can make it larger by pulling the bottom-right corner of the panel.



Catwalk calling!
This workshop was commissioned, but not printed, by Anne Pogoda for Ballistic Publishing's artist: Fashion Design. www.bit.ly/1fx-fashion

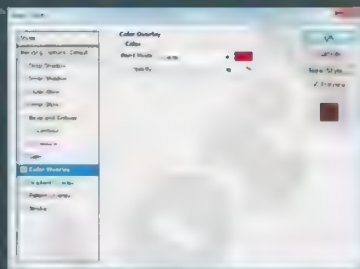
15 Supply shields and weapons

Much like the belt and headpiece sections, the shields and weapons can be designed flat and then transformed to match the correct perspective. Symmetrical designs can also be easily achieved in the same manner as the pastels texture covered in the cuisse step. Once the image has been skewed, details and lighting can be added to help the object appear more three-dimensional.



14 Generate some hairstyles

Once the hair's flat fill is complete, I create a new layer and rough in the highlights. Giving the hairstyle volume can be achieved by creating layered chunks of hair. Starting with a flat colour fill in an Alpha Group, I create a new layer and add strands using a lighter colour. I select the Smudge tool and brush the hair downwards. This blends the strands and creates a feathery look. I create another layer inside the Alpha Group and set it to Color Dodge to add shine. I merge all hairstyle layers, click the layer and open the Layers Style window. To colour the hair I select Color Overlay, and set Parameters to Illustrated.



16 Final character variants

Here you can see four examples of the combinations created from the pieces in this workshop. Using layers in this way is a great way to create unique, varied characters. Try it for yourself!

Next month in...
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

TOLKIEN

Donato Giancola explains how to draw and
paint Middle-earth masterpieces



ISSUE 91 ON SALE *Friday 7 December*



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ImagineFX Christmas 2012

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amazing art on his website!
www.donatoart.com

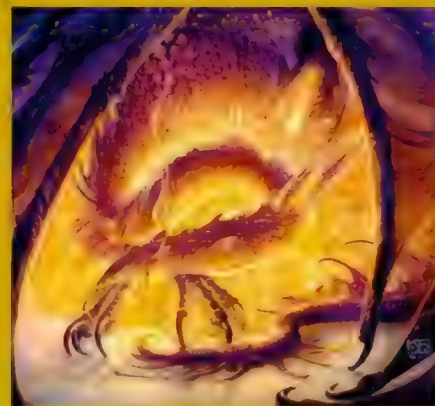
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pair of adventurers.

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How to paint a breathtaking
landscape, as Noah Bradley
gets inspired by Tolkien.



Photoshop CREATE A GROUP OF CHARACTERS

Blizzard's **Laurel D Austin** discusses how she paints Sarah Kerrigan, the mutated human leader of the Zerg, in a rare moment of reflection

Artist PROFILE

Laurel D Austin
COUNTRY: Canada/US



Laurel is working at Blizzard Entertainment and was previously at Bethesda Softworks.

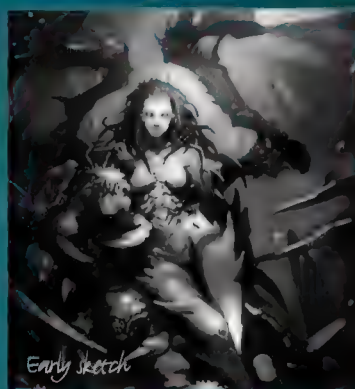
She has worked on character and weapon design on Bethesda Softworks' shooter BRINK. She has been working in the games industry as a concept artist and illustrator since the start of 2007.

www.laureldustinart.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

To help with Blizzard's showing at Gamescom 2012, I made this painting of Kerrigan, the Queen of Blades. The

StarCraft universe is one of my favourites to paint, and the Zerg are especially fun subjects. They've got a ton of variation and character to inject into them, all wrapped up in spiky exoskeletons and slimy glowing blobs. My intention with this piece was to showcase Kerrigan's interactions with her Zerg 'pets' and give a sense of her languid yet threatening presence with a combination of sinuous curves and angular, aggressive shapes.



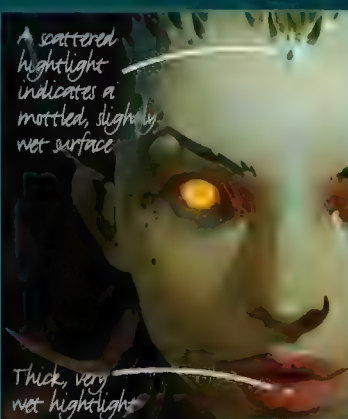
Early sketch

1 Edges

I use hard and soft edges to modulate the viewer's perception of the space. Harder edges in bright light appear closer to the viewer and softer edges in the dark appear further away. You can intensify the impact with Photoshop's Gaussian Blur filter to produce an effect similar to photographic depth of field.

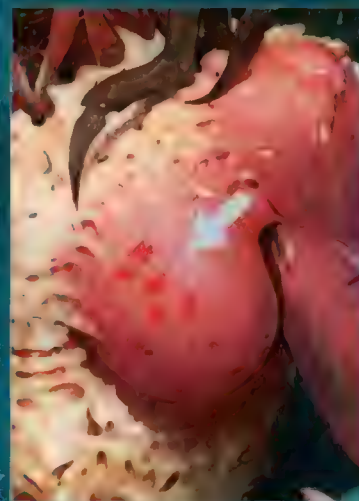
2 Wet textures

I use specular highlights to create a wet surface on my main character. These are generally the most contrasty type of highlight, so use small. They are many tiny reflections of the light source, so their colour should match that of the light. The tighter and brighter the highlights, the wetter the object will appear.



A scattered highlight indicates a mottled, slightly wet surface

Thick, very wet highlights



3 Subsurface scattering

As I paint Kerrigan's oily alien body I use subsurface scattering, the term for the way light is transmitted through translucent materials. It transmits through the object's surface and is 'scattered' in the underlying layers, producing an effect that causes saturated colour to bleed through to nearby surfaces. In most cases, highlighted surfaces are more saturated in colour than nearby shadows, but subsurface scattering can cause a dramatic reversal in this tendency.



WATCH THIS!

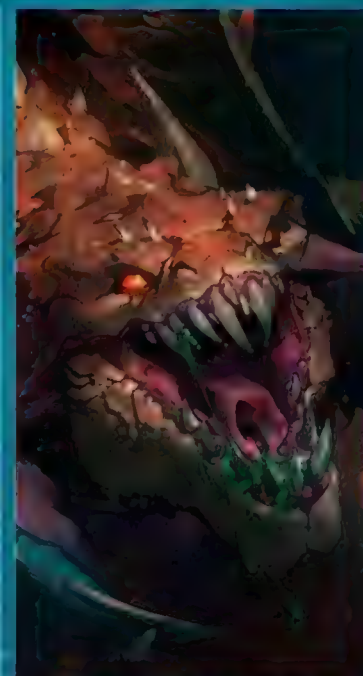
Images © 2012 Blizzard Entertainment

PRO SECRETS

Blending modes

Layers with different blending modes are exceptionally useful in creating different effects. If you want to quickly heck in a more ethereal, atmospheric feeling, try colour-dodging your paint by pasting it on a new layer and changing its blending mode to Screen. This is when everything, like a





Shortcuts

Change your brush size
Alt+right-click (PC & Mac)
Enables you to alter the brush size in Photoshop without losing your place.

4 Fused shadows

Over-detailing areas of darkness is a common mistake among inexperienced artists. Making too many layers, and not lowering the opacity for the very last ones, they are indistinct. Details in shadows should be reduced, and edges should be murky, if not eliminated altogether. In the areas around the Zerglings I choose an edge and drop the opacity down to 10% like I said. It's a common mistake if this technique.

7 Real-world anatomy

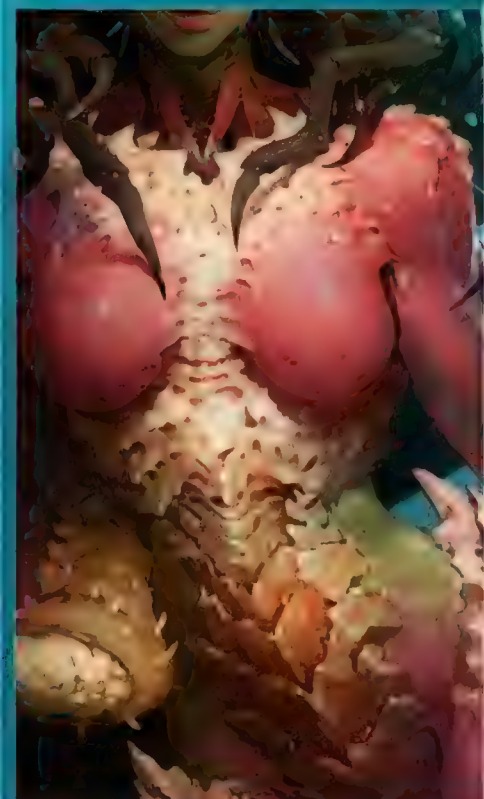
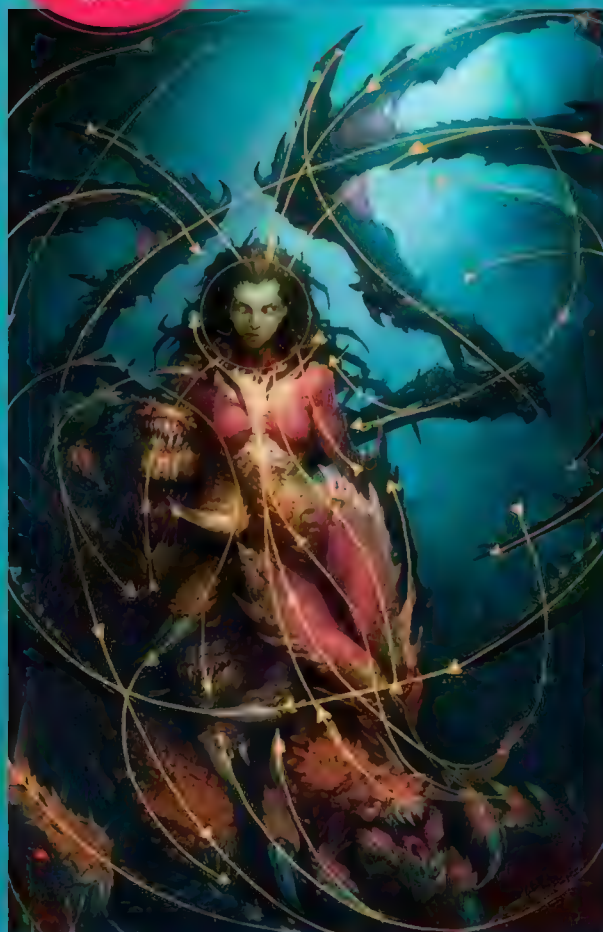
Even with fantastical characters like the Zerg, basing them on real-world anatomy helps sell them as believable characters. When working with already established designs, you can still put in a lot of your own ideas that fit with the original. Here, I base the Zergling tongues on those of Burmese Pythons. The white, bony areas of Kerrigan are based on the pale underbellies of crabs.

5 Keep the eye moving

When composing any painting, one of the things foremost in my mind is making a harmonious composition. My most common method for this is arranging the elements of the composition to draw the viewer's eye both throughout the whole image and away from eye traps like the corners. The most important aspect is how these lines flow.

6 Give it character

A huge part of the fun of creating paintings of groups is giving unique character to each individual, yet having them read in a group. As I paint I ensure each Zergling is a slightly different colour and has a slightly different face shape. If you're trying to achieve this result, think about ways you can vary your characters to give them all a distinct flavour.



8 Thick to thin

When working with spindly shapes like Kerrigan's wings, it's important to vary their thickness to keep the shape from becoming monotonous and uninteresting. I find adding interesting silhouette detail, such as the bumps, hairs and spines, is helpful.



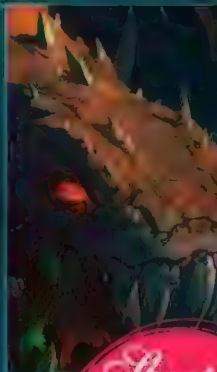
PRO SECRETS

Alpha channels

Alpha channels are great ways to save selections in Photoshop. If you find yourself constantly making the same selection with the Lasso or Marquee tools, paint it into an Alpha Channel instead and you can easily go back to it later.

9 Colour temperature

Making interesting colour relationships is key to making a compelling illustration. The most typical arrangement is a warm highlight and a cool shadow, which is what I have to do here on the Zerglings at the bottom of the painting. This relationship can be flipped, too. On the green skin of Kerrigan's face, where the sharpest highlight on her forehead is the same blue as the atmosphere behind her, I use this colour technique. It warms to a yellow green in the shadows on the lower half of her face.



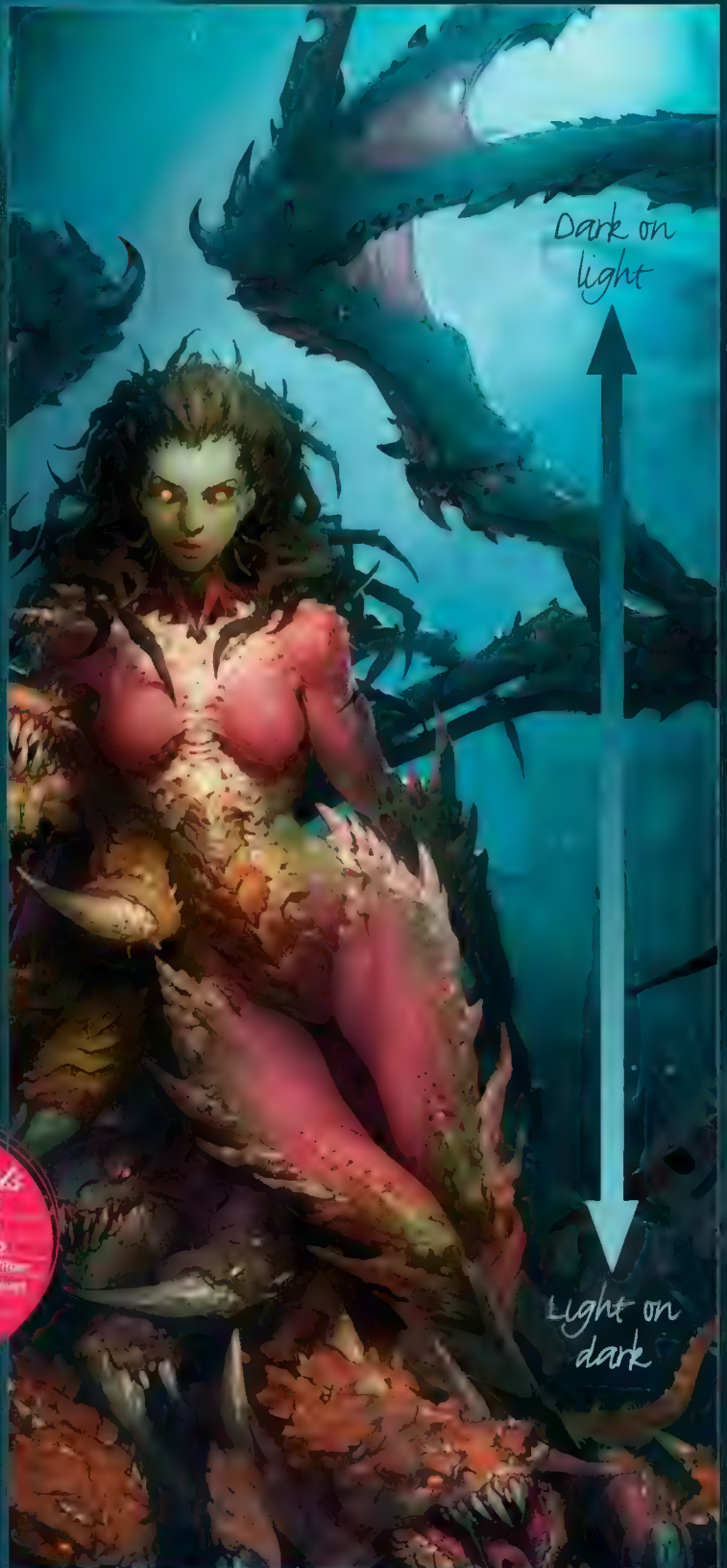
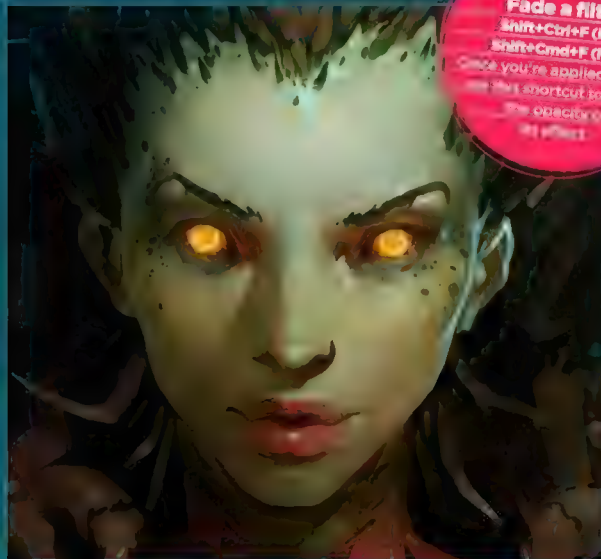
Shortcuts

Fade a filter

Shift+Ctrl+F (PC)

Shift+Cmd+F (Mac)

Once you've applied a filter, use this shortcut to adjust the opacity of its effect.



10 Keep track of your values

When doing groups of characters, it's useful to shift the way their values relate to the background, to make them truly feel part of the picture's environment. Towards her head and wings, Kerrigan is mostly dark on a light background, but she shifts to light on a dark background on her lower body. In the less-important areas, she's dark on dark, which is lower contrast and draws less attention. Try it yourself!

Photoshop LOOK TO THE PAST WHEN PAINTING

Playing around with historical references and fashions is a great way to create personality in a painting, as **Jessica Oyhenart** explains.

Clothes explain who someone is, where they come from, where they've been. Someone told me once that choosing the outfits you wear was like designing your own character – and it becomes your own visual storytelling. So every character's design begins with their story. What tales would a time traveller have to tell...?

Well, I think they'd be someone adventurous, curious and probably a collector. If I could visit different cultures and times, I imagine all the trinkets I would be drawn to. When it comes to

picking pieces to mesh together, research is important because I'm referencing actual time periods that existed, rather than a made-up world. I love exploring online databases of historical fashion plates, and I collect books on design and history from various eras. Doing this research is something I enjoy in my free time, too, and whatever I'm interested in at the moment will often filter into the work I'm doing.

On the technical side, I want to be sure about my design before I begin rendering, because my day job is conceiving for

video games and there isn't time to noodle on something that isn't quite working. I regularly hunt for new ways to streamline things, and I'm always surprised by how much you can do with Photoshop when you understand it more. Saving masks was something I learned recently at a workshop, which enables you to render and adjust colour while maintaining clean edges. It saves me tons of time and has become something I use every day. I hopefully this time traveller workshop is informative and will maybe even help you with your own process.

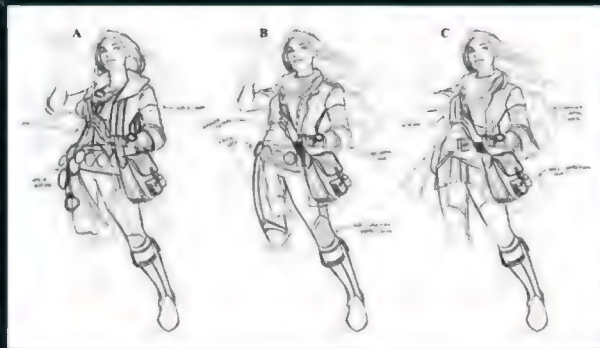
1 Introduce visual clues

It's great to use lots of visual clues and details to reinforce the concept behind your character. Since this one is supposed to be a time traveller, the idea is that she has collected clothing, clocks and trinkets from her journeys. I also want something interesting for the background, so I imagine she makes a time-travelling portal from her pocket watch. This thumbnail gives me a pose where I can show off her clothing and collected treasures, and an interesting shape to frame the figure with the portal. It also gives me some lighting options to develop as I begin to work on the figure.




2 Telling a story

When designing her outfit, I want it to be practical, yet also have some components from specific time periods to tell a little bit of a story. Her coat is easiest to play with: I'm really into Napoleonic-era art and fashion right now (A and B), and I also want to try a more elaborate, 18th century gentleman's coat (C). Some part of her costume needs to be older, so I find some Viking-era metalwork motifs that could be turned into a belt. She could have layers of collected kimono or more exotic things about her person. Mixing up different times and places will make her seem well-travelled.



Artist PROFILE

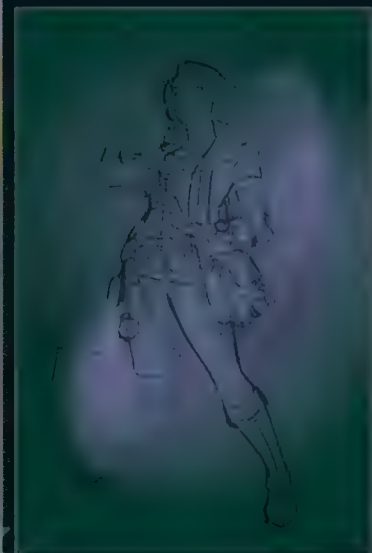
Jessica Oyhenart
Illustrator



After studying at the University of the Pacific, Jessica Oyhenart moved to Los Angeles to pursue her passion for art. She has worked as a concept artist for several years and is currently working on a new project. Her work is characterized by its detailed and imaginative nature, often drawing inspiration from historical and fantasy themes.

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

[www.artbyjessica.com](#)



3 Set up the canvas

After settling on a sketch, I increase my resolution to at least 300dpi and make the canvas a reasonable size (this one is about 12 inches tall). Then I set the drawing layer style to Multiply and make a new layer underneath it to fill with colour. Usually I pick a colour arbitrarily, but this time I want the piece to feel cool so I go with blue-green. Using large textured brushes I block in where my light sources will be.

depth Look to the past





The Shortcuts
Warp Tool
Stretch, twist, and move a layer or selection around a point in the image.

4 Layer strategy

On another new layer I begin blocking in the clothing, skin and other colours on the figure. I make a new layer in case I change my mind or want to try several variations, working loosely and quickly. It's also important that my background colour bleeds through the colours I'm laying down – this will tone them and keep the piece harmonious. I then make a new layer on top of the drawing and start more refined rendering. I make lots of new layers as I add elements and refine areas. When they become overwhelming, or I think I'm happy with my progress so far, I'll flatten all my layers and save out a new PSD version.

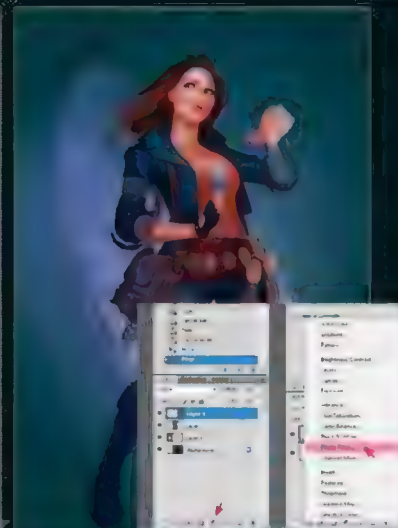
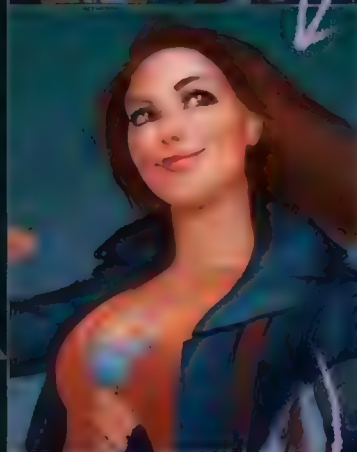
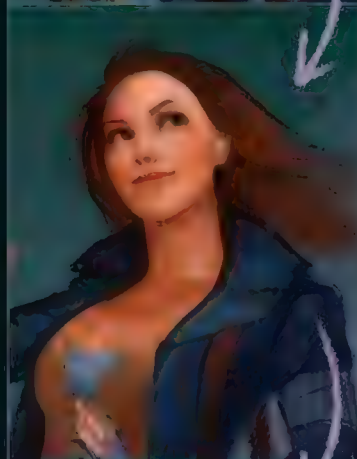
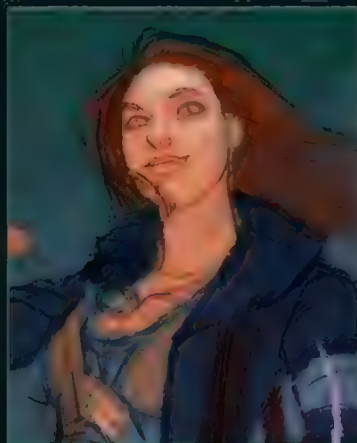
5 Start introducing detailed elements

I try to progress from big shapes to smaller detail, and to work all over the canvas. This enables the shapes and light to build up together and stay cohesive. I use a soft Round brush and the standard Round brush to build up shadows around the edges of the face and jaw line, and establish a second, more even light source on the character. Once the forms are right and blocked in, I can move on to the smaller, finer details. These include defining the mouth better, my sharper edges, the glossier materials of the hair and eyes, and adding a rim light from the magic pocket watch. As the rendering progresses, it's a really good idea to flip your canvas. This is where I can see any errors and make small adjustments in proportion and shape.

PRO SECRETS

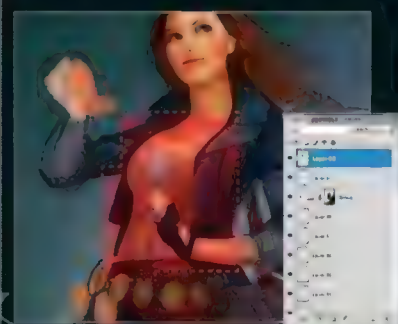
Use your references

There are many ways to use references. I use the reference to help me with the anatomy of the figure. The reference is also used to help me with the lighting and the overall mood of the piece. I use the reference to help me with the composition and the overall look of the piece. I use the reference to help me with the colour palette and the overall style of the piece. I use the reference to help me with the texture and the overall feel of the piece. I use the reference to help me with the overall quality of the piece.



6 Adjustment layers

Sometimes the colour isn't quite where I want it, so I'll make Adjustment layers where I can experiment and change things. In the Fill/Adjustment layer menu, the Photo filter has lots of adjustable overlays. I chose one of the preset options to produce more of a blue tone on my piece and edit the opacity to make the overlay stronger. I can also make tweaks if things become too blue by masking areas of the Adjustment layer. I love using these tools because at any point I can back track, change or throw away this step and not lose any of the work I've done before.

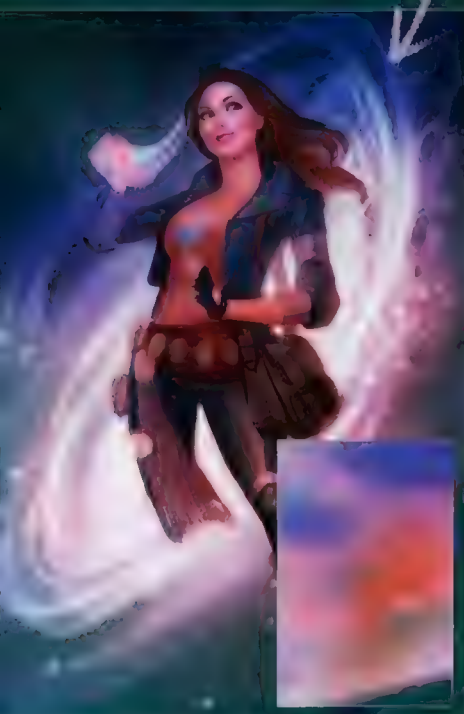


7 Mask off areas

I'll also use layer masks to render and adjust specific areas. I decide her vest needs more saturation and a slightly different hue. After I fill the selected area with a warmer colour, I can adjust the layer mode and opacity until I achieve the result I'm after. Often I'll use several layers with a range of layer modes because different combinations produce varied, interesting results. Once I have the colour I want, I can mask or erase the areas that I don't need and clean up my edges. It's helpful if you know that there are some shapes you'll come back to often, such as the outline of the figure, her coat or her boot, to make one selection mask and save it so you don't repeat this step over and over again.

8 Head into space

I grab a high-resolution, public domain image of a spiral galaxy (www.bit.ly/ifx-spiralgalaxy) that I layer in to make my magic portal quickly. I can then go back and pull out the swirling shapes I want and make the stars and sparkles more magical looking.



9 Adjust the portal

I make a new layer featuring big blobs of bright colours and set that layer to Overlay and a lower opacity. This enables me to give more variation to the magic portal shapes, because it looks too blown out and monochrome.



PRO SECRETS

Look to the fashion pages

Get your inspiration from the fashion pages. I used a mix of 1940s and 1950s fashion magazines to get the look of the outfit. I also used a mix of 1940s and 1950s fashion magazines to get the look of the outfit. I also used a mix of 1940s and 1950s fashion magazines to get the look of the outfit.



10 Apply patterns

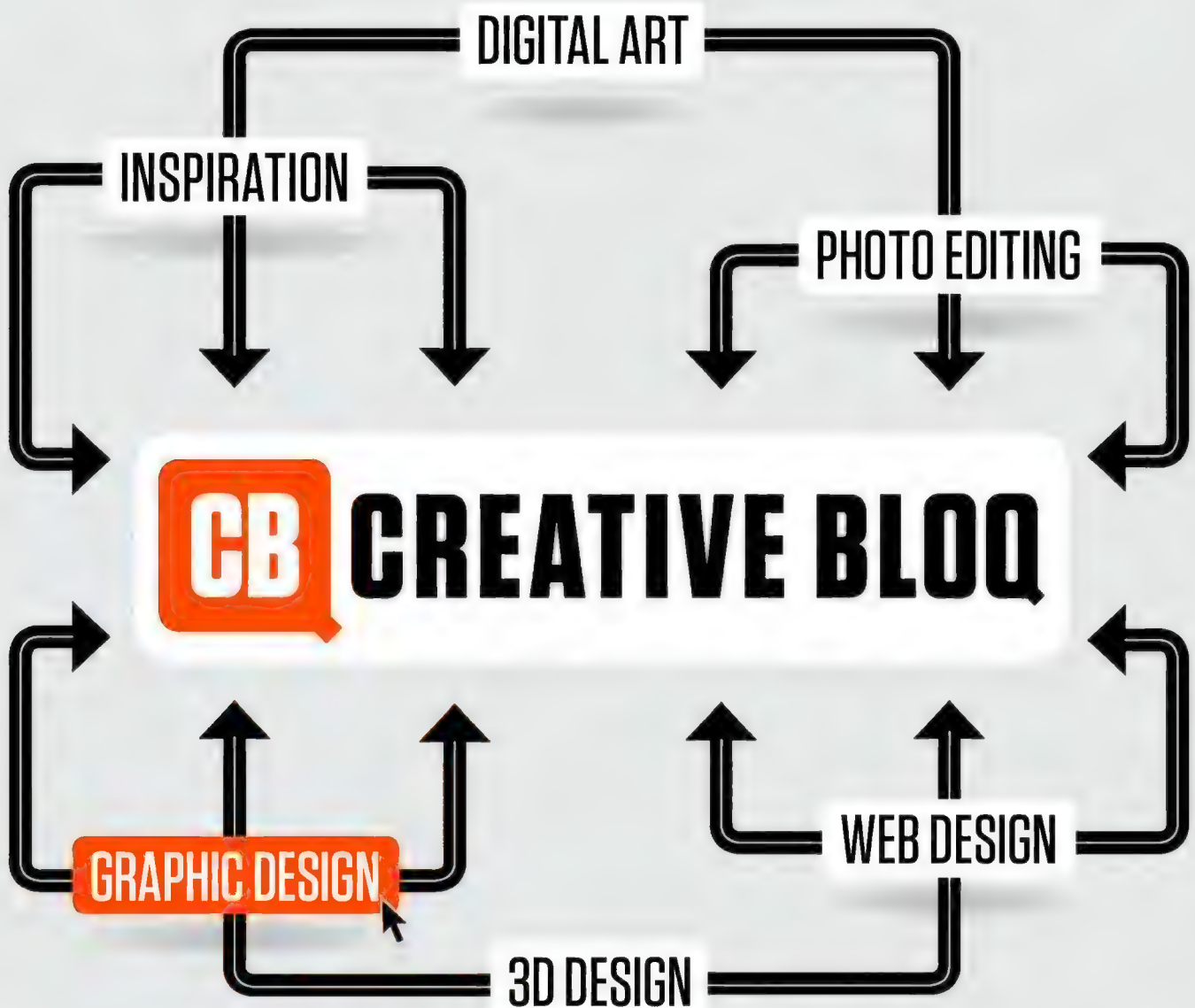
When texturing, it's essential that the patterns follow the forms of the object that they're on top of. I use the Selection tool, then under Edit > Transform I choose a mode to bend my texture to match the surfaces in my drawing. For an organic shape like her coat, I use the Warp tool. I also manipulate the texture in chunks, breaking it up to match the main shapes. For the arm, I make a rectangular selection and rotate the texture until the long sides follow the edges of the arm. Then with the Warp tool I bend the horizontal guides to follow the perspective on the arm. You can also line up the edges of the texture with the edges of the arm and bend the texture to make it look like it wraps around the cylindrical form. Mask or erase out any parts you don't want.



11 Final tweaks

I finish off little details, like the goggles, highlights, the buttons on the coat (and anything I've forgotten or put off until now). And she's done!

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HARDWARE

104 Galaxy Note 10.1

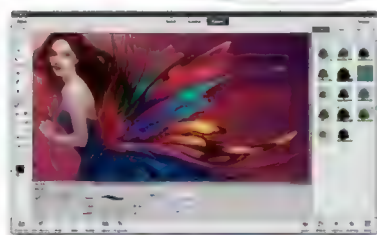
Samsung's latest tablet comes complete with a stylus – but is it good enough for digital artists?

105 Nexus 7

Part phone, part tablet, all Google. And ideal for plein-air painting.

106 Bamboo Stylus pocket

You'll be amazed at how you much can customise this stylus.



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107 Photoshop Elements 11

Not got the budget for the pro version of Photoshop? This cut-down version still has much to offer.

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This free app from Corel enables you to control Painter from your iPad.

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Tarzan: The Centennial Celebration; Robert Crumb: Sketchbooks, 1982-2011; The Art of Wreck-It Ralph.

TRAINING

109 Anatomy Workshop: Figure Drawing Principles

Painter Charles Hu talks light and the human form, plus everything you need to know about shadows.

FILMS

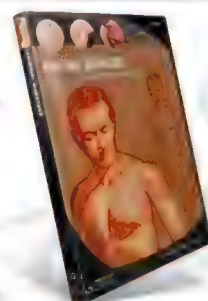
110 New movies

The Amazing Spider-Man; Men in Black 3; Dark Shadows.

VIDEO GAMES

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RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious

Christmas 2012

ImagineFX

The screen is clear and colourful, although its resolution is a meagre 1,280x800 pixels

Not keen on the off-white colour? There's a black one available, too



Galaxy Note 10.1

STAR STRUCK Android tablets are fluid, slick and powerful, and are making waves among tech enthusiasts. But is Samsung's Galaxy Note 10.1 suitable for digital artists?

Price £375 **Company** Samsung **Web** www.samsung.co.uk **Contact** +44 (0)232 454395

Android phones may have eclipsed the iPhone, but the iPad is still ahead in the tablet market – just. Apple's device accounted for 52 per cent of tablet sales so far in 2012, but Android is catching up at 48 per cent, according to the Pew Research Center. After a shaky start the Android tablet has matured, thanks in no small part to premium devices such as Samsung's Galaxy Note 10.1.

A huge element of the iPad's success has been the manner in which

Apple has marketed the device to digital artists, and app developers have helped, too. Major players such as Adobe and Autodesk found miniaturised but powerful versions of their products (Photoshop and SketchBook, respectively) listed alongside indie newcomers ArtStudio and Brushes in the App Store. Android's Play Store is similarly stocked with art apps, including both Adobe and Autodesk's products.

The Galaxy Note 10.1 feels squarely targeted at these digital artists. It

At 10.1 inches (hence the name), the Galaxy Note's screen is slightly bigger than the iPad's 9.7-inch display.

comes with a nifty stylus, dubbed the S Pen, which neatly tucks into the main body of the device. The full version of Adobe Photoshop Touch is pre-installed, as well as Samsung's bespoke S Note software, which makes basic image creation and editing possible. The touchscreen is hugely accurate, both to prods from the finger and the nifty stylus, which neatly tucks into the device's corner.

The stylus gives the Galaxy Note 10.1 a massive advantage over the iPad – especially for artists – in its pressure

Front and rear-facing cameras make self-portraits and landscape shots nice and easy.

Photoshop Touch comes pre-installed.

It may look solid and metallic, but the silver surround is plastic and feels a little fragile.

The stylus that's included is pressure-sensitive, making it ideal for artists.



There's a neat hole in the right corner of the screen that the stylus slides into, so (hopefully) you'll never lose it.

“The stylus gives the Galaxy Note 10.1 an advantage over the iPad – especially for artists – in its pressure sensitivity”

sensitivity. The screen is able to recognise a whopping 1,024 levels of pressure, so firmer strokes result in thicker lines. The iPad offers similar functionality, but you have to invest in a special stylus to access it. It's a definite boon for artists, and it means work can be far more detailed and precise than on an iPad.

Although Apple and Samsung have been locked in a notorious patent war, Samsung's device doesn't look too much like an iPad. It features a similar white-and-silver colour scheme, but it feels far more like a landscape device than Apple's oversized phone. The only issue here is that the silver bits

are plastic rather than Apple's beloved brushed-aluminium, which makes the device seem a little cheap and flimsy.

It may feel cheap, but the device is actually rather expensive. The £375 asking price is about £50 more than the equivalent iPad, and although its interface and design is polished it can't match Apple's famous sleekness and ease-of-use. If the price comes down to the £300 mark then we'd definitely recommend it above the iPad – that pressure sensitivity counts for a lot. It's fabulously fully featured, but it doesn't quite have the tablet nous to take a bite out of Apple. ●

DETAILS

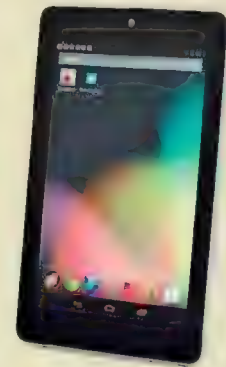
Features

- Android 4.0 operating system
- 1.9 megapixel camera (front), 5.0 megapixel camera (rear)
- 7.1x10.3x0.35 inches, 10.1-inch display
- 1,280x800 resolution
- 1.51lb
- 1.4GHz quad-core processor
- 16GB built-in storage
- MicroSD slot
- Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth
- Photoshop Touch S Note and S Suggest come pre-installed
- Stylus included

Rating



The Nexus 7's compact size makes it ideal for taking on plein-air painting expeditions.



Nexus 7

SLIM JIM Google's smartphone offers an alternative art solution...

Price £159

Company Google

Web www.google.com/play

RATING ★★☆☆

Google's flagship Android tablet isn't attempting to compete directly with the iPad; instead it offers a halfway house between a smartphone and a full-blown tablet. It comes in at a rather low price, but still manages to be feature-packed and top-of-the-range. The tablet runs the latest version of Android, and includes a Tegra graphics chip for powerful 3D graphics and smooth web browsing.

For artists, the Nexus 7 is equally cursed and blessed by its seven-inch form factor. While its slim-paperback-book size makes it easy to slip into a rucksack or large pocket, it's also just a bit too small for epic compositions. Most popular apps, such as Photoshop Touch and SketchBook, allow for zooming in and out, but it still feels a little cramped. It also lacks a rear-facing camera, so you won't be able to take a snap and create art around it.

The screen is tough and responsive, though, even if it lacks Samsung's infinitesimal pressure sensitivity. The whole device feels far more solid and well-designed than the Galaxy, and it'll certainly withstand a good bashing about. It represents a good compromise between smartphone and tablet, and the price makes it an ideal way to try creating digital art in the fresh air.

Bamboo Stylus pocket

FULL OF SURPRISES The famed graphics tablet maker offers full-length and stubby-sized iPad styluses in one – plus a flurry of tiny accessories

Price £35 **Company** Wacom **Web** www.wacom.com **Contact** info@wacom.eu

You'd think that a stylus for your tablet computer (iPad or otherwise) would be the simplest thing on Earth. Pull it out of the package, start drawing, bosh bosh. But with its **Bamboo Stylus pocket**, the latest in its range of iPad-friendly implements, Wacom appears to have other ideas. It's all a bit fiddly as you start – although some benefits do become clear with use.

The slim package contains not just the stylus, but also half a dozen more small pieces of equipment, plus an illustrated booklet explaining how to attach or plug in the assorted pieces.

There's a cap that clicks securely over the nib when you're not drawing: dangling from it is a plastic clip that fixes neatly into your tablet's headphone jack (assuming it's using the standard 2.5mm design), so that you always have your stylus close by.

What looks like a replacement nib is actually a soft rubber to complement the Bamboo pocket's default firm nib. You can swap them at will, although not without it feeling like you're tugging at the incumbent nib just a little too hard for comfort. Offering firm and soft nibs is a great idea: in practise, we'd say it's more a soft nib and a softer nib, with little to choose between them in responsiveness. If you're a heavy user (in both senses) and wear out nibs easily, Wacom helpfully offers three-nib replacement packs in a choice of firm or soft.

Style-conscious artists can express their individuality by changing the silver ring near the nib end for either a metallic blue or red ring. Wacom could reasonably be accused of overdoing the accessories by this stage.



Offering firm and soft nibs means you can tailor the Bamboo pocket to your style of drawing.

The Bamboo pocket differentiates itself from its Wacom siblings with a inner and outer barrel design that enables you to make the pen longer or shorter as desired. If this seems like a space-saving exercise a design that doesn't take up much room fully extended, think about how you use regular pens or pencils. Some artists grip their implement near the nib; other prefer to hold the other end to free up their mark-making and achieve a sketchier feel.

As its shortest length, the Bamboo pocket is perfect for this technique: you have a level of control you just can't achieve with a longer barrel. Not every design decision Wacom has made for this stylus comes off however – changing some components gives little payoff for quite a bit of fuss. But the main attraction of the expandable barrel is a resounding success.

The Bamboo pocket works with any tablet art package, although Wacom is naturally recommending its own Bamboo Paper Notebook app to iPad owners. It's a simple sketching and note-taking tool, with few pen or colour options and little to distinguish it from the mass of drawing apps you probably already have on your iPad.

DETAILS

Features

- Swappable soft and firm nibs
- Extendible barrel
- Tablet attachment
- Colour nib rings

System Requirements

Device with capacitive touchscreen, including iPad and Android tablets. No software requirements.

Rating



Pull or push to change the length and make it comfortable to paint with.

Tablet



Accessories include a cap with attachment and colour rings for your style statements.



Quickly customise the functionality of Cinco so you can control Painter the way you want to.



Cinco

VERY APP Control Painter from your iPad. Now that is cool!

Price Free

Company Corel

App Store www.corel.com

RATING

Artists are always on the lookout for new ways and tools to speed up their workflow. And if you work in Painter and have an iPad, then Cinco – an official, and free, app from Corel on the App Store – may be just the ticket. The app, using a multi-touch interface, enables you to control Painter. How? It requires Painter 12.2 and a Wi-Fi network. It's a cinch to connect – give your service a name in the new Connection Painter Preference pane, turn off multitasking gestures on the iPad and connect to the service from the iPad.

Then you choose palettes and select the specific tools that align to your fingers on the iPad screen. You calibrate Cinco by placing your hand on the iPad screen – then once your tools are set up, you swipe through palettes as pages. It's a lot easier to use than explain! It works as an interactive shortcut tablet – you can control your favourite functions without touching the keyboard. You can set it up for left or right-handed use and it's the perfect companion to your tablet. A great tool. And free! A no-brainer for Painter users who own an iPad.



You can change between tools for different creative activities using the top-right controls.

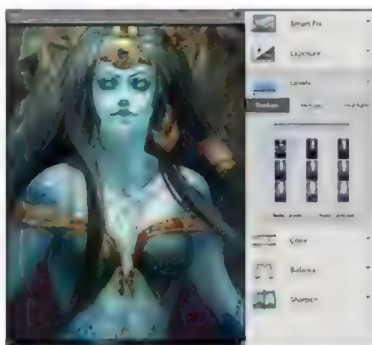
Photoshop Elements 11

ELEMENTS WATSON The latest budget image-editor from Adobe packs a punch. But is it worth the money?

Price £80 **Company** Adobe **Web** www.adobe.com/uk **Contact** 0800 028 0148

Photoshop Elements is Photoshop's younger and not quite as powerful sibling. But as versions have progressed, it's become a very good tool for digital artists and (especially) those who want to edit and correct photos or other images. And with version 11, the software gets better again.

If you're unfamiliar with Elements, when you first open the application, you're presented with an **Organiser** and **Photo Editor**. The former is a simple, yet effective organisation tool for your images. It'll import images from other apps, such as **iPhoto**, on your machine and it also enables you




Photoshop Elements includes a Quick editing mode, where colour, levels and exposure are all laid out in a plain and simple way and can be tweaked with ease.

to quickly share photos and do minor fixes.

The Elements Photo Editor is the main app though. And on opening for the first time it feels very basic. But, by navigating the three tabs – Quick, Guided and Expert – you can set up the software for your level of image-editing competence.

We're guessing that you'll choose Expert mode and here it feels a lot like Photoshop. You can load Photoshop brushes and Actions in – the latter being a new feature – which is a nice bonus. Other new features include more filters for turning photos into illustrations (which may be useful for comp work), better extraction tools, tilt-shift effects and a few more tweaks as well.

But, is it actually any good for the digital artist? Well, yes, and if you're on a budget it's a decent all-round tool. The Brush dialog is familiar, enabling you to adjust size and opacity along with Fade, Hue Jitter, Scatter, Spacing, Hardness and Roundness. So there are plenty of brush dynamics options. And actions support makes adding your custom effects a lot easier.

Elements is undoubtedly a good tool for the cash – and in terms of versatility, for an £80 application, you'd have trouble bettering it. 



The Brush Settings dialog in Elements 11 will be familiar to anyone who has used Photoshop before, and the app looks and feels professional in Expert mode.

DETAILS

Features

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System Requirements

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Tarzan: The Centennial Celebration

THE JUNGLE BOOK The definitive history of one of fiction's most-loved, and most-drawn, characters

Author Scott Tracy Griffin **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30
Web www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

This year marks a century since the publication of Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes*, the seminal tale of a feral orphan raised by gorillas in the African jungles. Scott Tracy Griffin's in-depth but accessible book aims to be the ultimate guide to the lore of Tarzan, as well as the numerous TV shows, films and art that it inspired.

Burroughs began writing when he stumbled across the lurid tales in pulp magazines his then-employees advertised in. "If people were paid for writing such rot as I read, I could write stories just as rotten," he told *The Washington Post*. He began with *A Princess of Mars*, a story that would become John Carter of Mars, before creating the world and characters of Tarzan.

As Scott notes, "Although not always credited as a natural writer, [Burroughs] was indisputably a natural-born storyteller. The sheer imaginative genius in his works is unparalleled." This "imaginative genius" not only inspired generations of writers, but also a whole wave of Burroughs's contemporary artists, who often illustrated covers of his books and the magazines his tales appeared in.

Fred Arting's first edition hardback dust jacket for *Tarzan of the Apes* from 1914 perfectly set the scene and

defined the design of Tarzan and his exotic locale. The silhouetted character sits poised in a tree while a lion stalks the savanna. It's stirring in its elegant simplicity. The Centennial Celebration juxtaposes this with Neal Adams's illustration for a 1975 reissue of the book, which poses Tarzan as a muscular brute about to save Jane from a vicious ape.

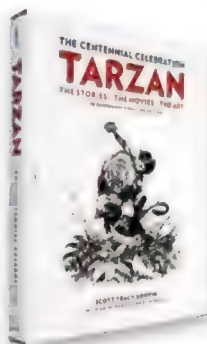
Art historians will love to see these various interpretations of Tarzan through the ages.

Burroughs was intentionally ambiguous in his description of Tarzan, and as Griffin points out he "never definitively specified the ape man's physical dimensions". As a result, illustrations of Tarzan vary from NC Wyeth's classically proportioned vision to Boris Vallejo's beefcake.

As well as presenting some astoundingly

incongruous art, *The Centennial Celebration* covers everything that Tarzan inspired, from the Johnny Weissmuller TV series, to Disney's underrated animated movie. There's even a complete guide to the language of the apes, and summaries of each of Burroughs' 25 original Tarzan tales. It's well-researched, fascinating and testament to Tarzan's longevity and legacy as an artist-inspiring character.

RATING



Further reading...

We check out a weighty comic tome, and lose ourselves in an arcade world

Robert Crumb: Sketchbooks, 1982-2011

Author Robert Crumb
Publisher Taschen **Price** £650
Available Now
RATING



Legendary underground comic artist Robert Crumb's sketchbooks have been published before, but this boxset is the first to collate his work from 1982 until 2011. It's absolutely huge and weighs a ton, with an epic price tag of £650 to match.

We'd imagine only the most ardent Crumb fan would invest in such a collection, but it's a fascinating read nonetheless. Crumb sets up his slightly seedy stall with a brief introduction in volume seven, explaining that his drawings trickle out towards the end of the collection.

The content of the volumes varies, with sketches accompanied by commissions, brief comic strips and doodles. It also offers a slight overview of the period's history, including a hilarious sketch of George W Bush.

The Art of Wreck-It Ralph

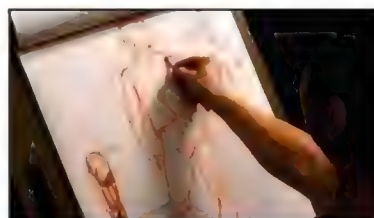
Author Jennifer Lee and Maggie Malone
Publisher Chronicle Books **Price** £25
Available Now
RATING



Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph* is to games what *Toy Story* was to toys. It concerns the titular character from fictional 1980's game *Fix-It Felix* and his quest among many games worlds. Each of these is examined in detail in this making-of book, from Ralph's 8-bit home to the violent modern shooter of *Hero's Duty* and finally to the colourful, 64-bit racer *Sugar Rush*.

Ralph's origins as an 8-bit character are evident in his square, chunky design, whereas *Hero's Duty's* Sergeant Tamora Jean Calhoun's appearance is more armoured and well-proportioned.

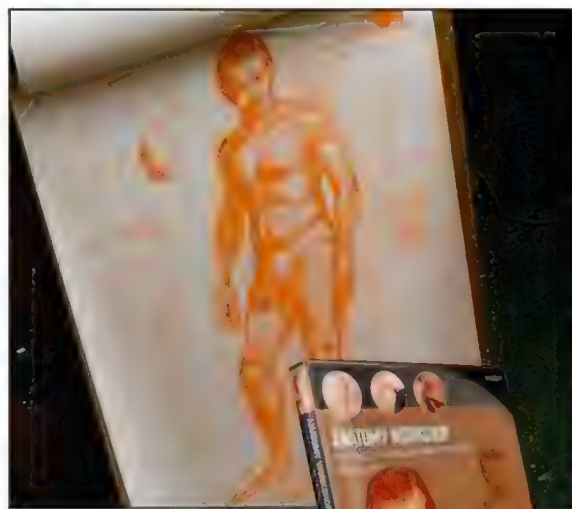
We receive a lot of design books for both games and animated films, and it's nice to see one that combines our two core passions.



Proportion concepts introduced in Charles's previous DVD are expanded on, with more complex poses to interpret.



In Figure Drawing Principles, Charles Hu shows how to accurately render the full tonal range, from highlights to shadows.



Anatomy Workshop: Figure Drawing Principles

ILLUMINATING Painter Charles Hu explores the effect of light on the human form and explains everything you need to know about shadows



Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$39 **Format** DVD/Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Whether you paint, draw or make potato prints, you're unlikely to create much art of value if you don't think about light: how it affects what you see, and how you should depict it. In Figure Drawing Principles, Charles Hu shows you how light and shadow relate to rendering the human form, although his guidelines affect everything you draw or paint.

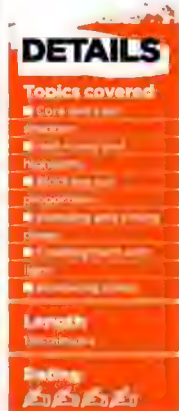
The video builds upon Charles's Anatomy Workshop: Structure and Proportion video (reviewed last issue), where he focused on proportion. You can watch this without having seen its predecessor, but you'll get more value from watching and studying both.

The opening chapter of Figure Drawing Principles covers all the basics of how shadows work in about 24 minutes. Charles walks you through concepts such as the visual differences between shadows cast by another object and shadows that appear because part of an object is facing

away from the light source. He also guides you through half-tones and highlights, the two other key elements of the tonal range.

Next, Charles blocks out three figure drawings using the techniques of establishing proportion he detailed in his previous video. Some people who bought the first volume may worry that these blocking-out sessions might retread territory they've already explored, but Charles sidesteps that risk by applying the techniques to more complicated standing and sitting poses.

One drawing is selected for Charles to work over as he applies his shading model in stages: first deep shadows, then half-tones and highlights. What's especially useful is the way he thinks afresh about each small element he draws, even though the broad principles remain constant. Other than the concepts Charles communicates, his continual engagement with his subject should inspire you as you develop your own art.



CHARLES HU

Charles is a figure painter and art instructor. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and began his instructional career at LA Academy of Figurative Arts. In 2007, Charles co-founded 3Kicks Fine Art Studio, also in Pasadena. His commissions include portrait paintings, character designs, murals and comic books. Charles currently instructs at Art Center College of Design and Gnomon School of Visual Effects.



www.bit.ly/ifx-chu



The friendly neighbourhood wall-crawling mutant prepares to face The Lizard.

The Amazing Spider-Man

WEB SAVVY The geeky hero returns in a big-budget instalment that's part character study, part CGI blowout

Distributor Sony Pictures Home Entertainment **Certificate** 12
Price £20 (Blu-ray, £25) **Available** 26 November

The release of this new Spider-Man film, five years after fan's favourite Sam Raimi wrapped up his trilogy, left many scratching their heads and asking, 'Why?'

The answer comes with director Marc Webb. In *The Amazing Spider-Man* there's no brand new origin story. What Webb does is put the focus back on the characters, and with the help of Andrew Garfield as Spider-Man and Emma Stone as Gwen Stacy, explores the loss and search for identity at the heart of the comic, without going into Chris Nolan-style heavy handedness.

It's a fine balance, and taken as 130 minutes of character development it'd be a total success. However, the 'necessary' quota of spectacular action scenes for a comic film of this budget seems at odds with the film's tone – at best an eye-candy spectacle, at worst a totally forced anomaly.

The story has a few mutations. Peter Parker, a precocious, harassed science

geek, is drawn to the enigma of his missing parents and the work on hybrid genetics of his father. He meets his dad's ex-colleague Dr Curt Connors (Rhys Ifans), who's pathologically driven to replace his missing arm.

A breakthrough occurs in mobilising the regenerative characteristics of lizards and soon Connors has grown a tail and bears a striking resemblance to the original Godzilla.

With the dark, pulsating concept art of George Hull (www.bit.ly/ifx-ghull) informing the largely CG-depicted city of the film, there's a clean, jagged and oppressive playground for Spider-Man to swing around. However, it's exactly at the points of action in these settings that the story's overfamiliarity threatens to neuter any suspense. It's thanks to the sharp script and great acting that this remains an enjoyably, if inexplicable, addition to the Spider-Man myth.

RATING



Also look at...

A Tim Burton remake disappoints and a sharp-suited duo turns back the clock



Dark Shadows

Distributor Warner Home Video

Certificate 12

Price £10 (Blu-ray, £16)

Available Now

RATING



The original *Dark Shadows* was a daily gothic-horror telly series that drew big audiences Stateside back in 1966. At its peak, 20 million viewers watched it during its five-year run. Despite the

hokey sets and actors of mixed ability, the audience revelled in the ambitious, off-kilter storylines that twisted and turned long before *Lost* gave that particular approach to TV scriptwriting a bad name.

Tim Burton's big-screen remake benefits from A-list actors, sumptuous sets and slick special effects, but unbalanced storytelling and a tone that veers from 1970s cheese to surprisingly gory, before settling on plain ol' dull, pushes proceedings into misfire territory. Johnny Depp's 200-year-old, unlucky-in-love vampire just about holds his own against feisty witch Eva Green, although his tried and tested camp schtick soon becomes tiring and testing. Even an Alice Cooper cameo fails to lift the mood.



Men in Black 3

Distributor Sony Pictures

Certificate PG

Price £10 (Blu-ray, £15)

Available Now

RATING



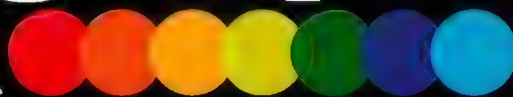
The bickering buddy movie formula gets playfully twisted in this third outing for this comic book caper. The realisation that both Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith are too mature to replay their

sparing partners has sent the cast back in time, reversing the roles as Smith's Agent J becomes the experienced foil to a 1969 Agent K – Josh Brolin stealing screen time with his impersonation of Tommy Lee Jones.

Up against *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *The Avengers*, *Men in Black 3* went under the radar this summer, but deserves your attention. This is fantastical movie making that wears its heart on its tentacled sleeve. Fitting in a host of inventive creatures, a finale based around the iconic Apollo 11 launch and squeezing in gags about Lady Gaga and Andy Warhol, *MiB3* also manages to neatly define and tie-up the central friendship of Agents J and K. A deserving end to the trilogy.

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Connor Kenway surveys the sights of Boston in winter, before it all kicks off.



Assassin's Creed 3

NEW FRONTIER A technical, artistic and historical revolution in the biggest Assassin's Creed game yet

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360 **Publisher** Ubisoft
Price £40 **Available** Now **Web** www.assassinscreed.com

Assassin's Creed 3 is set on the American frontier, but begins in an English opera house. It's a spectacular piece of design from art director The Chinh Ngo and his team, made more spectacular by how long it's in the game. Ten minutes after entering, you'll never see the location again.

Games are built on repetition, but Assassin's Creed 3's art team have invested hundreds of hours in locations and characters you'll see only once. It's a triumph of sheer manpower – a game made by over 300 people in studios around the world, all coordinating around Ubisoft Montreal's art direction to build an America



around the time of the Revolutionary War. It's an America centred around Boston, New York and the forests and mountains of the frontier where, for the first time, your Assassin will traverse the treetops, hunt animals and fight in battles where thousands of character models are tossed around by AC3's powerful engine.

Chinh's vision isn't so much historically accurate as it is theatrically accurate. It's a Hollywoodised fantasy version of the Revolutionary War where everything is a little brighter, a little sharper and a little more stylish. It's a rule applied to every character and every environment – perfectly dressed actors on perfectly framed movie sets – but not to new assassin Connor Kenway, whose Native American-inspired design cuts the blandest figure in Assassin's Creed's short history. He's a dull protagonist in a spectacular world, frequently upstaged by other characters, and the only major problem in Chinh's lesson on not letting reality get in the way of a beautiful piece of art.

RATING

Also look at...

Environments elevate one gaming experience, and diminish another's



Dishonored

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360

Publisher Bethesda

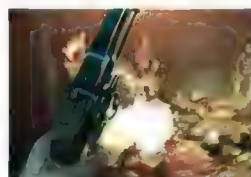
Price £40

Available Now

RATING

Viktor Antonov's art direction nearly steals Dishonored's show. It's a game of stealth and assassination built around systemic AI and Viktor's art more than careful AI scripting or narrative design. His work on Dishonored's city of Dunwall is immediately recognisable from his past work on Half-Life 2's City 17: the neo-Victorian city is rendered in textures on which the brush strokes are still visible.

Viktor's obsession with brushed metal and gravity-defying elongated structures has carried over from Half-Life 2, making obvious the game's enemies with their tall, razor-thin temporary walls, checkpoints, armoured cars and trains. Their cold steel constructs are alien in a city of red brick and ragged stone, and tells a story of a world



gone wrong. Half-Life, it seems, taught Viktor a lesson – how to tell a story with art, and how space is a better storytelling device in a video game than any cutscene or scripted moment.



Fable: The Journey

Format Xbox 360

Publisher Microsoft

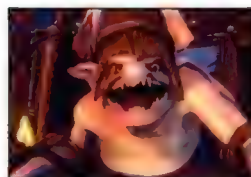
Price £40

Available Now

RATING

Fable spin-off The Journey's Kinect controls are sloppy and imprecise, and proof that Kinect isn't cut out for adventure games. If Microsoft's own studio can't make it work than nobody can.

Fable's cartoonish world of exaggerated proportions and comical performances have made the leap to Unreal



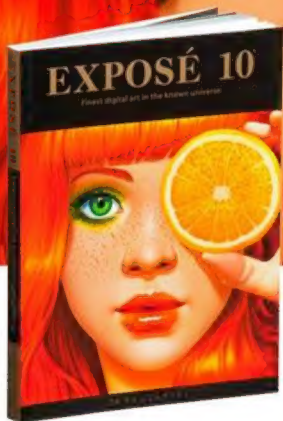
well, with rich greens on the surface and dark purples in the game's dungeons where your Kinect-powered spells cast light in dim environments. Unfortunately, the weaknesses of Fable's art

design have made the leap too.

Established by Ian Lovett for the first game, Fable's art looks sharper in the Unreal Engine 3 than it ever did in the muddy and indistinct Fable trilogy, but still makes for an uninspiring fantasy world. Fable's greatest weakness runs to its very foundations – you've seen this world, or bits of it, a hundred times before.

EXPOSÉ 10

Image courtesy: Daniela Uhlig, GERMANY Red Orange



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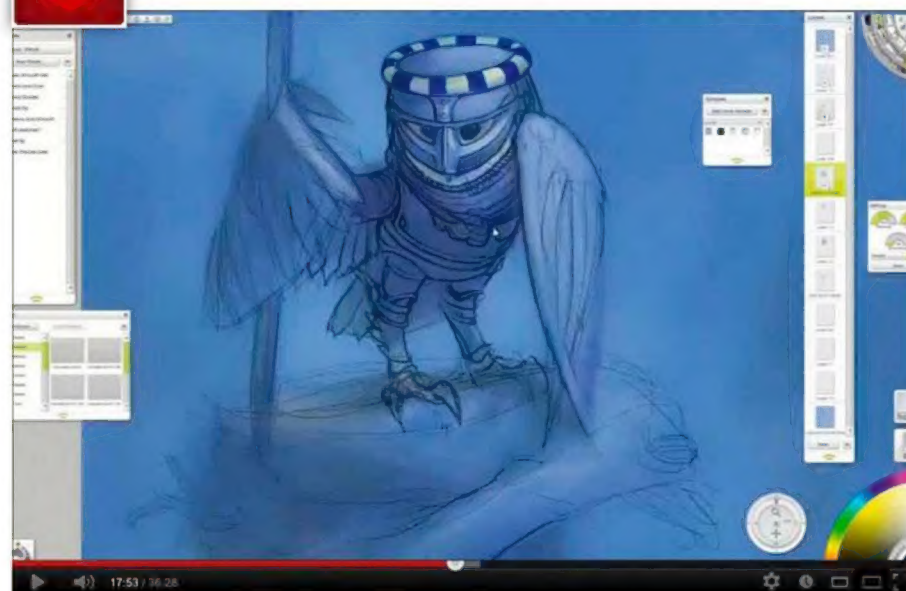
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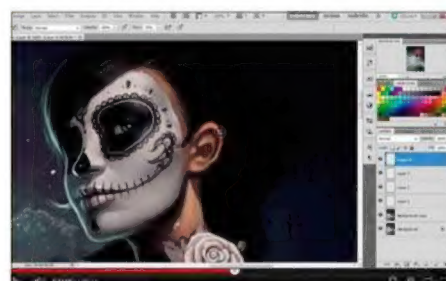
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Just a few of the brilliant artist videos that you can find on our YouTube channel...



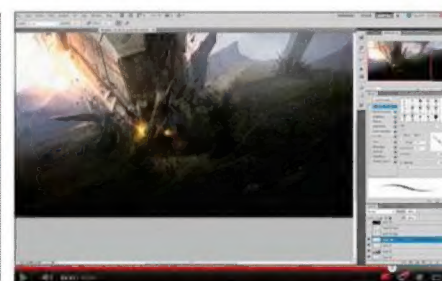
Paint an armoured owl

Using Sketchbook Pro and ArtRage, Nick Harris has fun turning a barn owl into a gallant knight. You can see his video at www.bit.ly/ifx-owl.



Fantasy figure

Charlie Bowater celebrates death with this character painting: www.bit.ly/ifx-death.



Crashing ship

Go to www.bit.ly/ifx-shipcrash to see Francesco Lorenzetti paint this scene.

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Bruce Heinlein

Q: Did you have any 3D software experience before coming to the DAVE School?

A: *No, not at all. My background was mostly graphic design.*

Q: How has your experience at the DAVE School been so far?

A: *It has been great. I have learned so much in such a short period, it has also opened up a whole new level of possibilities for my creative side.*

Q: Tell me about this Model?

A: *This was created in less than a week. It was our second week project.*

Q: Wow! Did you think that you would be able to create something like this in your second week of school?

A: *Absolutely not! When the instructor showed us the reference material, my jaw dropped! I'm glad that I decided to come to the DAVE School, and look forward to what I can do next.*



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